

# Petrarch and His Readers in the Renaissance

Edited by  
Karl A.E. Enenkel  
and Jan Papy



~~Intersections~~

Yearbook  
for Early  
Modern  
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PETRARCH AND HIS READERS  
IN THE RENAISSANCE

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EDITED BY

KARL A.E. ENENKEL  
JAN PAPY



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*Illustration on the cover:* Petrarch Master, Petrarch in his study. Woodcut, Franciscus Petrarcha,  
*Von der Artzney bayder Glück* [...], Augsburg 1532, fol. <V>v.

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of 1974,<sup>1</sup> we are far from having a clear picture of the way in which the reception of Petrarch actually worked. Partly, this may be due to the sheer quantity of his reception, and partly to the explicit and massive self-presentation of the ‘father of Humanism’. For almost all of his writings are characterised by an unusually strong and expressive autobiographical drive. To modern readers, it may seem that this expressive autobiographical self-presentation must have left little room for ‘alternative’ interpretations: the author made perfectly clear what he stood for and what his opinions were. In this respect, he was even hailed to be the ‘first modern man’ in the sense that he was the first writer who can be regarded as an ‘individual’ in modern terms. It is somewhat difficult to imagine that earlier readers, from the 14th to the 16th century, did not ‘understand’ these clear self-expressions or have understood them in a way very much different from the ‘author’s intention’. However, it is especially this peculiarity which makes Petrarch an interesting test-case for modern reception theory.

Modern reception theory (‘Rezeptionsästhetik’, ‘Wirkungsästhetik’) was founded at the end of the 1960s by German scholars such as Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauß as an inspiring antidote for sometimes all too authoritative, all too hierarchical and exclusive readings of ‘text-immanent’ scholars such as Emil Staiger and Wolfgang Kaiser.<sup>2</sup> The healthy and challenging provocation of traditional text-

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<sup>1</sup> Whereas the commemoration of 1904 saw the birth of the ‘Commissione per l’Edizione Nazionale delle Opere di Francesco Petrarca’ and started the production of numerous important critical editions, scholarship from 1974 onwards turned to a new inventory and study of manuscripts. Parallel to this the Italian, French and German scholarly tradition—initiated and continued by scholars such as Dario Cecchetti, Giuseppe Billanovich, Aldo Scaglione, Pierre Vianey, Marius Pieri, Franco Simone, Paul Piur, Konrad Burdach, Nicolas Mann and Joseph Burney Trapp—gave new impetus to investigate Petrarch’s influence on their ‘national’ cultural heritage. A good impression of the 1974 *status quaestionis* in Petrarch-scholarship can be found in Scaglione A. (ed.), *Francis Petrarch, Six Centuries Later. A Symposium* (Chapel Hill-Chicago: 1975). On the French tradition, see now Balsamo J., “«Nous l’avons tous admiré, et imité: non sans cause». Pétrarque en France à la Renaissance: un livre, un modèle, un mythe”, in Balsamo J. (ed.), *Les poètes français de la Renaissance et Pétrarque* (Genève: 2004) 13–32 (esp. 13–14).

<sup>2</sup> Iser W., *Die Apellstruktur der Texte. Unbestimmtheit als Wirkungsbedingung literarischer Texte* (Konstanz: 1970); id., *Der implizite Leser* (Munich: 1972); id., *Der Akt des Lesens* (Munich: 1976); Jauß H.R., *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft* (Konstanz: 1967); id., *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation* (Frankfurt a.M.: 1970); id., *Kleine Apologie der ästhetischen Erfahrung* (Konstanz: 1972); id., *Ästhetische Erfahrung und liter-*

interpretations consists in the hypothesis that the meaning of a given text is formed only by the process of reading. In their theory, Iser and Jauß tried to define the interplay between the effect of a text ('Textwirkung') and the activity of a reader ('Leseraktivität') and to describe the 'part' of the reader in the process of reception ('Leseranteile'). In doing so, Iser developed theoretical concepts such as the 'implicit reader' ('der implizite Leser'),<sup>3</sup> 'Leerstelle', 'Realisation', 'Unbestimmtheit',<sup>4</sup> 'Wirkungspotential' etc.

It is a very important achievement of the 'Rezeptionsästhetik' to have drawn attention to the reader who was all too long neglected by scholarship. In this light, it is sometimes a little disappointing that the theory produced fewer results on the level of detailed empirical research than one would have hoped for. One of the reasons may be that the above mentioned central notions turned out to be difficult to use because their definitions are partly unclear, partly somewhat inadequate. For instance, it is hard to define what exactly is meant by the 'implicit reader' or what exactly would be a 'Leerstelle' ('empty place'). It does not clarify much when Iser identifies the 'implicit reader' with the complex and vague notion of the „Wirkungsstruktur des Textes“.<sup>5</sup> As Matthias Richter states in his evaluation of the 'Rezeptionsästhetik' (1996): "Die genaue Erforschung der Leseprozesse im Umkreis sozial-, medien- und geschlechterspezifischer Fragestellungen hat in den vergangenen Jahren überhaupt erst eingesetzt."<sup>6</sup>

There are, moreover, a couple of other problems which make it difficult to transfer the theory of the 'Rezeptionsästhetik' into the practice of the study of literature. One of them is that Iser in fact moved in the direction of traditional text-interpretations by explaining the reception processes by certain qualities of the text ('Wirkungspotential'). In other words, it is somehow due to the text itself that readers interpret it in the way they do. 'Competent readers' will

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*arische Hermeneutik* (Frankfurt a.M.: 1982); id., *Die Theorie der Rezeption—Rückschau auf ihre unbekannte Vorgeschichte* (Konstanz: 1987); Link H., *Rezeptionsforschung* (Stuttgart: 1976); Müller J.E., *Literaturwissenschaftliche Rezeptionstheorien und empirische Rezeptionsforschung* (Frankfurt a.M.-Bern: 1981).

<sup>3</sup> See Iser, *Der implizite Leser*.

<sup>4</sup> See Iser, *Die Apellstruktur der Texte. Unbestimmtheit als Wirkungsbedingung literarischer Texte*.

<sup>5</sup> Iser, *Der implizite Leser* 60.

<sup>6</sup> Richter M., "Wirkungsästhetik", in Arnold H.L. – Detering H., *Grundzüge der Literaturwissenschaft* (Munich: 2001 [4th edition]) 516–535 (esp. 520).

understand the text in a ‘competent’ way and it is the text, organised by the author, which ‘guides’ them in their ‘competent’ reading.

Another problem is that especially Iser, but also others, have limited the interest of the ‘Rezeptionsästhetik’ to a certain group of texts, namely fictional texts.<sup>7</sup> According to Iser, only fictional texts have the special quality that enables readers of various historical epochs to put into the text-interpretation their own experience. Only fictional texts provide the ‘Leerstellen’ and ‘Unbestimmtheiten’ as indispensable predispositions for differing and interesting interpretations. Here, once again, Iser focuses more on the qualities of texts than on the readers themselves.

In our view, the study of the reception of texts should be based on different points of departure. The focus on the reader is too precious to bring it down to certain qualities of the author-texts or to a certain group of texts, or even worse to a kind of author’s intention. If this should be taken into account for reception studies in general, it is especially relevant for reception studies concerning the Early Modern Period. In our view, the early modern interpreter *acted much more independently from the text and the author’s intention* than Iser’s ‘Rezeptionsästhetik’ suggests. Therefore, it is better to avoid (vaguely defined) notions for qualities of the text, such as ‘impliziter Leser’,<sup>8</sup> ‘Leerstelle’, ‘Wirkungspotential’ or ‘Textwirkung’. They do not really help us to understand the process of reading and interpretation.

Furthermore, it does not make sense to limit our interest to ‘fictional’ texts or to ascribe the quality of poly-interpretability exclusively to them. In the Early Modern Period there was no clear distinction between ‘fictional’ and ‘non-fictional’ literature. For instance, a historiographical text had, in this respect, essentially no different status than an epic text. Therefore, with respect to early modern literature, the notions ‘fictional’ and ‘non-fictional’ hardly form a sound basis. Petrarch, in fact, provides an interesting test-case, since he wrote ‘fictional’ (e.g. *Canzoniere*) as well as ‘non-fictional’ texts (e.g.

<sup>7</sup> See for example Iser, *Der Akt des Lesens* passim.

<sup>8</sup> Ansgar Nünning proposed in a paper published in 1993 to dismiss the notion of the ‘impliziter Leser’. See Nünning A., “Renaissance eines anthropomorphen Passepartouts oder Nachruf auf ein literarisches Phantom? Überlegungen und Alternativen zum Konzept des ‘implied author’”, *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 67 (1993) 1–25.

treatises, historiography, autobiography, private prose-letters). From the case studies collected in this book, it appears that with respect to the poly-interpretability in the process of reception there is no essential difference between 'fictional' and 'non-fictional' texts. Early Modern readers have connected both texts to their 'Erfahrungswirklichkeit' ('experience') and to other systems of interpretation and use in various and remarkably different ways.

In which way could one thus adequately understand the various interpretations and uses of Petrarch's works? First of all, they cannot be reduced simply to an individual basis, nor do they occur in an indefinite number and variety, nor is their structure based on mere coincidence. The intellectuals who dealt with the works of Petrarch acted in various intellectual discourses which reflect certain paradigm's, focuses, interests, needs, rhetorics, text genres, experiences ('Erfahrungswirklichkeit') and, not to forget, a certain 'Weltanschauung'. For example, an Italian courtier of the style of Castiglione's *Cortegiano* would read the *Canzoniere* or the treatise *De remediis utriusque fortune* in a different way from a Lutheran citizen of a German town; a Latin humanist would interpret Petrarch's *De vita solitaria* differently from an adherent of the Netherlandish *Devotio Moderna*.<sup>9</sup> As Marc Laureys expounded in his study on Giovanni Cavallini and as has been analysed by Ugo Dotti, contemporary intellectuals, both in Avignon and at the Imperial Court in Prague, adapted Petrarch's political message in different ways and according to their own needs and expectations. In his paper on the reading of Petrarch's *Rime* in 16th-century France, Jean Balsamo discerns certain types of reading: 'royal readings', 'protestant readings' and 'political readings'.

In our view, Michel Foucault's historical discourse analysis<sup>10</sup> could provide an extremely useful tool for defining the process of early modern text-reception in a more adequate way. If the Early Modern readers were largely independent from Petrarch's author's intention and from specific qualities of his texts, they did not act independently from the various intellectual and artistic discourses in which their activity took place.

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Enenkel K.A.E., "Der andere Petrarca: Francesco Petrarca's *De vita solitaria* und die *devotio moderna*", *Quaerendo* 17 (1987) 137–147.

<sup>10</sup> Foucault M., *Archäologie des Wissens* (Frankfurt a.M.: 1973, originally in French Paris: 1969).



It is striking to observe how far removed the various discourses in which readers from the Early Modern Period interpreted Petrarch's works are from Petrarch's 'author's intention'. The readers' interpretations and uses also cannot be explained by 'Leerstellen', 'Unbestimmtheiten' etc. They differ remarkably from Petrarch's aims and interests and from the structure of his texts as well. In some cases, the reading is even a 'Kontrafaktur', a correction and contradiction of the text.

A striking example of this process of interpretation is the German edition of Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortune*, illustrated by the famous 'Petrarch Master' ('Petrarca-Meister') and analysed here in two studies by Karl Enenkel and Reindert Falkenburg. Enenkel's close analysis of the relationship of text and image brings to light that the illustrations do not just render Petrarch's textual argument in a pictorial form, but transfer the text into very different and often contradicting discourses. The stunning images of the 'Petrarch Master' transform the Stoic-Christian manual for meditation, for example, into the discourses of Lutheran polemics, of the satirical book of Folly (*Narrenschiff*), of a practical guidebook teaching how to act successfully in the material world ('praktisches Weltbemeisterungsbuch'), of fundamental Christian ethical criticism ('Sittenkritik') or harsh social criticism (against the German nobility). Enenkel demonstrates that the 'Diskursverlagerungen' of the Petrarch Master are not to be explained by certain qualities of Petrarch's text, but by adaptations to the need of Petrarch's users in early 16th-century Germany. Reindert Falkenburg discusses the creative re-readings of the Petrarch-Master by a close analysis of his inner-pictorial rhetoric and by his use of intriguing speculative imagery.

The remarkable independence of the Early Modern interpretations from the author's intention and the structure of the text is also true for Petrarch's contemporaries and close friends. Jan Papy demonstrates that even Petrarch's closest friend, his 'Socrates', Lodewijk Heyligen or Ludovicus Sanctus, who was Petrarch's first literary critic and the executor of his literary will, acted in very different intellectual discourses, thus producing different readings and interpretations from the start. This is also true, as Ursula Kocher expounds, for another "ungleiche Freundschaft", between Petrarch and Giovanni Boccaccio, and, moreover, it works also the other way round. When Petrarch 'translated' Boccaccio's novella of Griseldis into Latin (*Griseldis historia*), he in fact transferred it into a totally different discourse with

an entirely different narrative structure and a fundamentally different ethical outlook.

Similarly, Bart Van den Bossche's study of Pietro Bembo's striking presence—and equally puzzling absence!—in some of Castiglione's books of the *Book of the Courtier*, sheds a new light on the creative potential of Petrarchism in Italian humanism and on its various 'readings', whereas Dóra Bobory's analysis of Petrarch's horoscope made by Gerolamo Cardano demonstrates the remarkable results the transposition of historiographical texts (Petrarch's biographies) into another discourse (horoscopes) can inspire. Joachim Du Bellay's intriguing readings of Petrarch, discussed here by Reinier Leushuis and Dina De Rentiis, are yet other examples for the remarkable independence of the Early Modern reader. The same goes *mutatis mutandis* for Jan van der Noot's *Theatre* of 1568, a highly creative translation and illustration of Petrarch's canzone *In Morte di Madonna Laura*, closely studied here by Paul Smith.

If all this, however, does not give the impression of being new, but rather to follow in the footsteps of traditional comparative literature, a discipline which in the case of Petrarch has been extremely rich, it remains to be clarified in which way the approach presented in this book differs from recent scholarship on the reception of Petrarch.

A short look at recent scholarship, especially the one presenting itself at the various conferences commemorating Petrarch, reveals how the traditional hierarchical and 'authorial' approach remains common practice. A striking example is the volume *Petrarca e la cultura europea* from 1997,<sup>11</sup> in which articles are devoted to Bernardo Lapini da Montalcino's 15th-century allegorical commentary on Petrarch's *Trionfi*,<sup>12</sup> on "Ronsard imitateur infidèle de Pétrarque"<sup>13</sup> or to the "Presenza del Petrarca nella letteratura francese" (Lionello Sozzi, pp. 243–262). However important and revealing these studies may be—all of them detailed and elucidating on various aspects

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<sup>11</sup> Rotondi Secchi Tarugi L. (ed.), *Petrarca e la cultura europea*, Istituto di Studi Umanistici Francesco Petrarca: Mentis Itinerarium—Caleidoscopio, VII (Milan: 1997).

<sup>12</sup> Eric Haywood, "'Inter urinas liber factus est': il commento dell'Ilicino ai *Trionfi* del Petrarca", in *Petrarca e la cultura europea* 139–159.

<sup>13</sup> By Yvonne Bellenger, *Petrarca e la cultura europea* 223–242.

of Petrarch's influence—they neglect to highlight the 'active' and in fact independent role of the reader.

In a similar vein, a respectable number of collective volumes and exhibition catalogues have appeared which offer insights into the influence of Petrarch on humanism,<sup>14</sup> into Petrarchism,<sup>15</sup> and into the transmission and presence of Petrarch's works.<sup>16</sup> Yet, if monographs such as Monica Berté's *Jean de Hesdin e Francesco Petrarca* open up aspects of the 'reading reception' of (some of) Petrarch's works,<sup>17</sup> and if various papers at the conferences devoted to Petrarch, either in the past or in the framework of the commemorative festivities of 2004, deal with certain readers or 'national' receptions of Petrarch's works in Europe in general,<sup>18</sup> in France,<sup>19</sup> Germany,<sup>20</sup> Portugal,<sup>21</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Two international conferences, both of them held in 2004, deserve special attention: first, *Petrarca e il Rinascimento*, was held in Calcutta at the Jadavpur University, Centre for Advanced Studies in English—Istituto Italiano di Cultura di New Delhi, from 14 to 16 October 2004. Second, *Petrarca, l'Umanesimo e la civiltà europea*, was held at Florence from 5 to December 2004. Here one paper touches, albeit indirectly, on the theme of the reader: Francisco Rico's contribution on 'Petrarca ed Erasmo'.

<sup>15</sup> In 2004, two major conferences were devoted to this theme: *Il Petrarchismo: un modello di poesia per l'Europa*. Convegno internazionale di studi, Bologna, 6–9 ottobre 2004, organized by the Dipartimento di Italianistica of the Università di Bologna; and *Petrarca y el petrarquismo en Europa y América*. Jornadas Internacionales, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la UNAM, Ciudad de México (18–23 October 2004).

<sup>16</sup> Exhibition catalogues such as Aurnhammer A. (ed.), *Petrarca in Deutschland, Ausstellung zum 700. Geburtstag (20. Juli 2004)* (Heidelberg: 2004); *Petrarca nel tempo. Tradizione lettrici e immagini delle opere*. Catalogo della mostra (Arezzo, Sottocchia di San Francesco, 22 novembre 2003–27 gennaio 2004).

<sup>17</sup> Published as volume 6 in 2004 in the series *Quaderni di Filologia Medievale e Umanistica* at Messina.

<sup>18</sup> Blanc P. (ed.), *Dynamique d'une expansion culturelle. Pétrarque en Europe XIV<sup>e</sup>–XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Actes du XXVII<sup>e</sup> congrès international du CEFI, Turin et Chambéry, 11–15 décembre 1995. A la mémoire de Franco Simone* (Paris: 2001).

<sup>19</sup> *La postérité répond à Pétrarque. Sept siècles de fortune Pétrarquienne en France, Sœur latine et seconde patrie du poète*, Avignon, 22–23 janvier 2004. Some titles of the papers read might be revealing examples of the approach defined by us as traditional "reception history": Jean Balsamo, "Premier cercle de réception pétrarquienne en France entre 1535 et 1545"; Romana Brovia, "La fortune du *De remediis* en France, du XIV<sup>e</sup> au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle"; François Fabre, "Pétrarque poète chrétien? La critique de l'*Africa* par Jean Gerson"; Yves Hersant, "Un adversaire de Pétrarque: Giordano Bruno"; Pierre Laurens, "Pétrarque, Montaigne, Chateaubriand".

<sup>20</sup> *Mondo tedesco in Petrarca—Petrarca nel mondo tedesco*. XXVII Simposio Internazionale di Studi Italo-Tedesco, Merano, 22–23 November 2004 and *Petrarca in Deutschland. Seine Wirkung in Literatur, Kunst und Musik*, Internationales Kolloquium Freiburg im Breisgau, 26.–29. September 2004.

<sup>21</sup> *O Petrarquismo entre Portugal e a Itália*. Segundo Encontro de Italianística, Instituto de Estudos Italianos 75 anos—Petrarca 700 años, Coimbra, 4–5 March 2004.

Croatia,<sup>22</sup> or even outside Europe,<sup>23</sup> a determined focus on the independent reader remains lacking. Examples are as numerous as telling: at an international conference, organised at Warsaw University from 27–30 May 2004 and devoted to *La tradizione del Petrarca e l'unità della cultura europea*, lectures were delivered on, for example, “L’influsso del Petrarchismo sull’ elegia neolatina” (by Grazyna Urban-Godziek, Cracow) or on “Gli inizi della fortuna di Griselda petrarchesca in Polonia” (by Grzegorz Franczak, Venice).<sup>24</sup>

It is our hope that this collective volume, starting from the idea of the ‘independent reader’, might inspire a new approach to Petrarch’s reception in the Renaissance and the Early Modern Period. For, if Petrarch already during his lifetime could proudly boast that he was read by a large audience, this book intends to shed a new light on the reading processes from the 14th to the 16th century, its creative re-readings, and its stunning transpositions of Petrarch’s text into new literary and artistic discourses. Even if we know that, again, this new light will be insufficient since ‘Pétrarque continue à nous échapper par le jeu de ses multiples représentations’,<sup>25</sup> we hope that it will inspire fruitful re-readings of the creative Petrarch-readings of the past.

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<sup>22</sup> *Petrarca e il Petrarchismo nella letteratura croata*, Split, 27–29 September 2004.

<sup>23</sup> The conference *Petrarca nel mondo*, organised at Incisa in Val d’Arno (19–20 June 2004), is a striking example. Next to Petrarch’s influence in various European countries, non-European countries have equally been discussed. Tadahiko Wada presented a paper on “La fortuna del Petrarca in Giappone”, Harry Wayne Storey on “Petrarca in America”, and Anna Bujatti on “Petrarca in Cina”.

<sup>24</sup> A similar focus was used by an international conference *Petrarca v strednej Európe—Petrarca nella Mitteleuropa*, held at Nitra from 22 to 23 October 2004.

<sup>25</sup> Mann N., *Pétrarque: Les voyages de l’esprit. Quatre études* (Grenoble: 2004) 111.

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## PETRARCH AND HIS 14TH-CENTURY READERS



CREATING AN 'ITALIAN' FRIENDSHIP:  
FROM PETRARCH'S IDEAL LITERARY CRITIC  
'SOCRATES' TO THE HISTORICAL READER  
LUDOVICUS SANCTUS OF BERINGEN\*

Jan Papy

Amicitiarum appetentissimus honestarum  
et fidelissimus cultor fui.  
Petrarch, *Letter to Posterity*

Among Petrarch's numerous friends one figure, treated with exceptional affection and attention, stands out: his 'Socrates'. Petrarch himself reveals that this 'Socrates', originating from the heaths of Kempen (in the Belgian province of Limburg),<sup>1</sup> was to be considered as his intellectual and emotional *alter ego*. Yet this mysterious

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\* This article is dedicated, as a token of my gratitude and friendship, to Andries Welkenhuysen (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven), my first and devoted guide to Petrarch's friendships and the beauties of his works. I trust that, small as it is, it may be found not altogether unworthy of its intention. My deep gratitude also extends to Ronald W. Truman (Christ Church College, Oxford) for correcting and improving my English text.

<sup>1</sup> Petrarch, *Familiares* IX, 2 (ed. Rossi, II, 214–215): 'Te autem, mi Socrates, te unum michi, quod mirentur posterī, non tellus Ausoniae, ut reliquos, dedit, sed Cereri ac Bacho et Minerve sterilis at virorum fertilis *mirica* Campinie—neve forsan rudis lector Campaniam dici putet, Campiniam dico, inferioris Alemanie, ut nunc vulgo fertur, vere autem extremam Gallie Belgice particulam, que inter levum Rheni latus et Olandiam ac Brabantiam iacet—ut inops patria divite gloriaretur ingenio et natura suum ius teneret e limo quolibet et quocumque sub aere magnos spiritus procreandi'. ('You, my dear Socrates, you alone—a fact which posterity will admire—have not been given to me by the land of Italy such as it offered me other friends, but Kempen, a heath sterile in corn, wine and commerce but fertile in great men. That the rude reader may perhaps not think that 'Campania' is said! I say 'Campinia', of lower Germany, as it is commonly said nowadays, but in fact the extreme part of France and 'Belgium', which lays between the left arm of the Rhine and Holland and Brabant—so that your native land, poor concerning riches, may be proud of its rich genius'). Instead of *mirica*, Vittorio Rossi, *Francesco Petrarca, Le Familiari*, 4 vols (Florence: 1933–1942) II, 214 argues for *nunea*, a reading that can be found nowhere in the manuscripts but seemed acceptable to Rossi because a village 'Nu(e)nen' could be located—though the distance between this Nu(e)nen, near Eindhoven, and Beringen is more than 60 kilometers! The reading *mirica* ('heath'), to be found in four manuscripts, has been defended by



friend remained an illustrious unknown until the early part of the last century—Petrarch never did unveil his friend's identity; in his poetry as in his prose writings he invariably referred to him with the *cognomen ex virtute* 'Socrates', a name given to him because of his seriousness and high spirits, his loyalty and open mind. It was only a hundred years ago, in December 1904, that the Belgian historian, Dom Ursmer Berlière, while investigating documents in the Vatican Archives, could identify Petrarch's soul-mate with cast-iron certainty: the literary figure 'Socrates' in Petrarch's oeuvre, of whom it had been thought before that he was a fictitious literary figure, even a nickname given by Petrarch to one of his intimate friends such as Gerard of Chartres, Stefano Colonna or even Laura (!),<sup>2</sup> was a true historical figure, viz. the Limburg musician Ludovicus Sanctus of Beringen (or, in Dutch: Lodewijk Heyligen van Beringen).<sup>3</sup>

Since then both Sanctus's ecclesiastical and musical career and also his literary output have been studied in great detail. Whereas Berlière had first focused on Sanctus's prebendal appointments and his famous letter written in Avignon in 1348 in which he warned his fellow canons at St Donatian in Bruges of the plague which was to decimate the population of Europe, Henry Cochin dealt with Sanctus's musicological treatise preserved in a Florentine manuscript.<sup>4</sup> Marc Dykmans, for his part, analysed his relation with Petrarch,<sup>5</sup>

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Dykmans M., "Les premiers rapports de Pétrarque avec les Pays-Bas", *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique belge de Rome* 20 (1939) 51–122 (p. 108). In addition, we find an additional argument in favour of Dykmans's reading *mirica* (which is a perfect antithesis to the fertile *tellus Ausoniae*) in Petrarch, *Epistole metrice*, I, 6, 81: 'Et Cererem, sterili vix hospita terra mirice'. For a full discussion of this problem, see Papy J., *Ludovicus Sanctus, vriend van Francesco Petrarca* (unpubl. diss. Leuven: 1987) 6–13.

<sup>2</sup> De Sade J.-F., *Mémoires pour la vie de François Pétrarque*, 3 vols (Amsterdam: 1764–1767) I, 160–161.

<sup>3</sup> Berlière U., *Un ami de Pétrarque, Louis Sanctus de Beeringen* (Rome-Paris: 1905). Berlière presented his discovery first in a lecture delivered on 12 December 1904 at the inauguration of the Belgian Historical Institute in Rome. It was Mgr. Georges Monchamp, vicar-general of Liège and director of the Royal Academy of Arts of Belgium, who in a lecture delivered in January 1905 revealed the discovery for the first time in Belgium, though omitting to mention Berlière's fundamental role in this research! Monchamps, however, was the first to connect Sanctus's family name with the Dutch name 'Heyligen', commonly found in Beringen. See Monchamp G., "Pétrarque et le pays liégeois", *Leodium* 4 (1905) 1–16.

<sup>4</sup> Cochin H., "Sur le Socrate de Pétrarque, le musicien flamand *Ludovicus Sanctus* de Beeringen", *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'Ecole française de Rome* 37 (1918–1919) 3–32.

<sup>5</sup> Dykmans, "Les premiers rapports" 51–122. In the meanwhile, Sanctus had been mentioned in other studies preceding the one by Dykmans, such as Auda A.,

Giuseppe Billanovich studied Sanctus as a collector of manuscripts,<sup>6</sup> and Andries Welkenhuysen, finally, devoted two detailed studies, and prepared critical editions, of Sanctus's own writings, viz. his treatise on musicology and his letter describing the devastating onslaught of the Black Death in Avignon.<sup>7</sup>

One question, however, in this well-documented 'Petrarch-Sanctus' file seems still to be open to discussion. When reading numerous eulogistic passages in Petrarch's writings praising Socrates's character (his loyalty, open mind, mature judgement and prudence) and intellectual development (his multifaceted cultural education and learning),<sup>8</sup> one wonders, especially when confronted with Sanctus's own 'medieval' writings, what kind of erudition and education Petrarch had in mind when praising his northern friend to the skies. Or, to put this question in another way: how deeply was his so-called *alter idem* from Beringen influenced by Petrarch, both as an intellectual in his own right and as a reader of Petrarch's works? And, finally, in which way did the musician Ludovicus Sanctus mirror the poet's own intellectual aspirations and humanist ambitions? A possible way to answer these questions is first to take a closer look at the precise character of Petrarch's friendship with his 'Socrates'.

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<sup>6</sup> Billanovich G., "Tra Italia e Fiandre nel Trecento. Francesco Petrarca e Ludovico Santo di Beringen", in Verbeke G. – IJsewijn J. (eds.), *The Late Middle Ages and the Dawn of Humanism outside Italy. Proceedings of the International Conference Louvain May 11–13, 1970*, Mediaevalia Lovaniensia I/1 (Louvain-The Hague: 1972), 6–18; Id., "Il Petrarca e gli storici latini", in Dionisotti D. (ed.), *Tra latino e volgare* (Padua: 1974), 67–145.

<sup>7</sup> Welkenhuysen A., "Louis Sanctus de Beringen, ami de Pétrarque, et sa *Sentencia subiecti in musica sonora* rééditée d'après le ms. Laur. Ashb. 1051", in *Sapientiae doctrina. Mélanges de théologie et de littérature médiévales offerts à Dom Hildebrand Bascour O.S.B.*, *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, numéro spécial 1 (Louvain: 1980) 386–427; Id., "La peste en Avignon (1348) décrite par un témoin oculaire, Louis Sanctus de Beringen (édition critique, traduction, éléments de commentaire)", in Lievens R. – Van Mingroot E. – Verbeke W. (eds.), *Pascua mediaevalia. Studies voor Prof. J.M. De Smet* (Louvain: 1983) 452–492.

<sup>8</sup> See, for instance, Petrarch, *De vita solitaria* II, 14 (ed. Martellotti, 560): 'Nosti hominem, quem et stabilis amicitie fides carum et Musarum multa familiaritas clarum facit; cum quo ita gaudium viteque iucunditas aderit, ut consilium non absit; ita vis ingenii vigorque animi ut, que his nonnumquam iungi solet, mestitie nulla nubes interveniat'.

*Avignon, Petrarch and Ludovicus Sanctus*

Petrarch and Ludovicus Sanctus, alike in age<sup>9</sup> and both looking for security through an ecclesiastical career in a centre which was intellectually stimulating, met in Avignon. This new residence of the Holy See had undergone an impressive metamorphosis. As a new centre of international relations organised in a powerful network of administrative, juridical and doctrinal activities, the city underwent a unique intellectual and cultural revival reflected in the erection of a papal university and library but also in a flowering of architecture, painting and music. Whereas new manuscripts, containing important ancient texts and commentaries on ancient history, culture and philosophy alike, were easily accessible, the new vogue of adding lustre to liturgical services with the recently developed polyphonic music also met with increasing success.<sup>10</sup>

Petrarch himself, who already as a law student in Bologna (1320–1325) had entertained friendly relations with the Colonna family, arrived in Avignon in March 1330 while accompanying Giacomo Colonna. Through Giacomo, the 26-year old Petrarch got to know, either in Lombez or Avignon, the Roman nobleman Lello Stefano dei Tossetti and Ludovicus Sanctus—his ‘Lelius’ and ‘Socrates’—, both in the company of Giacomo’s brother, Cardinal Giovanni Colonna.<sup>11</sup> Like many other talented musicians from the renowned music school of St Lambert in Liège, Sanctus had been invited to Avignon in 1330 by the Cardinal who, because of Sanctus’s remark-

<sup>9</sup> Petrarch, *Familiars* IX, 2 (ed. Rossi, II, 215): ‘Hec [sc. mirica Campinie] te [. . .] genuit atque in lucem misit illo ipso tempore quo ego procul alio terrarum orbe nascebar’.

<sup>10</sup> Guillemain B., *La cour pontificale d’Avignon (1309–1376). Etude d’une société* (Paris: 1962) 711–715; Mollat G., *Les papes d’Avignon (1305–1378)*, 10<sup>me</sup> édition, revue, remaniée et augmentée (Paris: 1965), 467–503; Laclotte M., *L’École d’Avignon. La peinture en Provence aux XIV<sup>me</sup> et XV<sup>me</sup> siècles* (Paris: 1960); Roques M., “Les apports néerlandais dans la peinture médiévale du Sud-Est de la France”, *Revue du Nord* 42 (1960) 293–303.

<sup>11</sup> See, for instance, Petrarch’s description in *Trionfo d’Amore*, IV, vv. 67–78: ‘Poco era fuor della comune strada,/Quando Socrate e Lelio vidi in prima:/Con lor più lunga via convien ch’io vada./O qual coppia d’amici! Che nè ‘n rima/Poria nè ‘n prosa assai ornar nè ‘n versi,/Se, come de’, virtù nuda si stima./Con questi duo cercai monti diversi,/Andando tutti tre sempre ad un giogo;/A questi le mie piaghe tutte apersi./Da costor non mi può tempo nè luogo/Divider mai (siccome spero e bramo)/Infin al cener del funereo rogo’.

able talents in music theory as well as musical performance,<sup>12</sup> wanted him to become the *magister in musica*, *cantor* and *capellanus* in his own chapel.<sup>13</sup> While that summer would later be lyrically and nostalgically recalled by Petrarch in his *Letter to Posterity*,<sup>14</sup> extensive descriptions of his friendship with his 'Socrates' can be found in various other writings of his as well.

*Petrarch and his 'Socrates': a literary friendship*

Because of the other's openness of mind, his fidelity, loyalty and virtue, Petrarch gave his friend Ludovicus Sanctus the cognomen 'Socrates', though he also called him 'Ludovicus magister' when speaking more informally about his friend.<sup>15</sup> The latter's character and philosophical qualities made him 'a wise and excellent man';<sup>16</sup> Petrarch habitually displayed regard for his friend's judgement and good sense. Obviously, Sanctus could be regarded as the friend from the North who had common sense,<sup>17</sup> 'vigor animi'<sup>18</sup> or great strength of mind, as can still be observed today when one reads his dispassionate account of the devastating plague in Avignon: in the midst

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<sup>12</sup> Petrarch also testified that, if Sanctus's friends had not decided to give him the *cognomen* 'Socrates', he would have called him 'Aristoxenus', this being the Greek philosopher and musical theorist who became the pupil of Xenophilus and Aristotle and whose reputation was such that he was expected to succeed to headship of the Lyceum. See Petrarch, *Familiares* IX, 2 (ed. Rossi, II, 215): 'cumque te ars musica in qua regnas, Aristoxenum dici vellet, vicit iudicium amicorum ut noster Socrates dicereris'.

<sup>13</sup> See the documents quoted in Berlière, *Un ami de Pétrarque* 31.

<sup>14</sup> Petrarch, *Epistola Posteritati* 15 (ed. Enenkel, 266): 'ab illustri et incomparabili viro Iacobo de Columna [. . .] in Vasconiam ductus, sub collibus Pireneis estatem prope celestem, multa et domini et comitum iucunditate, transegi, ut semper tempus illud memorando suspirem'.

<sup>15</sup> See the autograph note on fol. 15v of his manuscript Vat. Lat. 3196: '1353. Veneris. 15 februarii circa solis occasum. Digresso ante vespere Ludovico magi[strol]', quoted in Rossi V., *Francesco Petrarca, Le Familiari* I, XLIX ('Introduzione').

<sup>16</sup> Petrarch, *Familiares* XX, 13 (ed. Rossi, IV, 38): 'vir sapientissimus atque optimus'.

<sup>17</sup> As has been stated by Tatham E.H.R., *Francesco Petrarca: The First Man of Letters. His Life and Correspondence*, 2 vols (London: 1925–1926) 424: 'The Fleming Ludwig ('Socrates') we should picture as a placid man of sound common sense and unruffled good temper—a little phlegmatic perhaps, but with none of those "angles" which sometimes cause a strain upon the closest friendship'.

<sup>18</sup> Petrarch, *Familiares* VII, 6 (ed. Rossi, II, 108).

of chaos and death, Sanctus could write a reasoned exposition of the situation. This temperament obviously attracted the Italian poet; it also inspired Petrarch to put his trust in his ‘Socrates’, and even to dedicate his collection of *Familiares* (*Rerum familiarium libri*) to him while entrusting him at the same time with the selection and publication of his most precious letter collection (*Familiares* I, 1; dated 13 January 1350). No small matter this if one considers how dear this collection, meticulously fashioned after that of Cicero which he had himself discovered in Verona in 1345, was to Petrarch the humanist and how crucial it was for his self-image in the eyes of posterity.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, if Cicero is omnipresent in this letter collection, he is no less to be found in Petrarch’s friendship with his ‘Socrates’. As a *Cicero redivivus*, a new Cicero, Petrarch interweaves tension and dynamic, pathos and resignation in that literary monument which his own collection of familiar letters is meant to be. In his literary world, as in his poetry, he frames his own *persona* in a world of tragedy and conflict—the well-known Petrarchan tension between his earthly love for Laura and his Augustinian desire to escape this world. In this world ‘Socrates’ is Petrarch’s sounding-board.<sup>20</sup> Seen in this context, it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish where exactly this published correspondence is determined by its underlying literary strata and where it echoes real conversations held between Petrarch and his friend. In any case, this distinction is unnecessary, for the literary layers seem to be an indispensable part of Petrarch’s friendship with ‘Socrates’. Conversely, Petrarch (and also Sanctus the editor of the correspondence) could not take this literary transformation of the historical Sanctus into the ideal friend ‘Socrates’ too far, thus risking producing an image of their relationship unacceptable to contemporary readers.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Enenkel K.A.E., “Die Grundlegung humanistischer Selbstpräsentation im Brief-Corpus: Francesco Petrarca’s *Familiarium rerum libri XXIV*”, in Van Houdt T. – Papy J. – Tournoy G. – Matheeußen C. (eds.), *Self-Presentation and Social Identification: The Rhetoric and Pragmatics of Letter Writing in Early Modern Times* (Leuven: 2002) 367–384 (esp. 371).

<sup>20</sup> Petrarch, *Familiares* VIII, 3 (ed. Rossi, II, 178): ‘Sumus, frater, sumus—quid dissimulem?—vere soli [...] preclaram illam Epycuri vocem iure possumus dicere: “Satis magnum alter alteri theatrum sumus”’.

<sup>21</sup> Petrarch, *Familiares* I, 1 (ed. Rossi, I, 6–7): ‘Sed non omnes tales iudices habeo; neque enim aut idem omnes sentiunt aut similiter amant omnes’.

Though not an Italian, Sanctus's cheerful face,<sup>22</sup> gentle character and open mind left an indelible impression on his friend, for, years later, Petrarch still testifies: 'It is remarkable how people, born so far away from each other, can be united by their like-mindedness and accord'.<sup>23</sup> Time and again Petrarch also emphasized how Sanctus, thanks to their friendship, had become an 'Italian'. Apparently, Petrarch felt the need to excuse his friend's origin while declaring that their friendship could transcend this barrier: 'What does your origin matter? I rather think of your spirit, which our friendship has made wholly Italian', so that he could later say: 'he [viz. 'Socrates'] is part of us'.<sup>24</sup>

If Petrarch is delighted by his personal conversations with 'Socrates', his friend is also involved in the making of Petrarch's literary monument, for he is 'the spokesman, the challenger, the critic and selector' of what was to go into it.<sup>25</sup> As a musician his competence was equally useful for Petrarch's sonorous poetry, for Petrarch wrote to his friend not only in prose but also in verse. Moreover, he praised his friend both in Italian and Latin, and, when dedicating to him his collection of 24 books of *Epistole Familiare*s, he asked him to appraise the literary quality and power of this literary monument, a monument which, in Petrarch's words, was intended to stand in praise of their friendship:<sup>26</sup> 'I would like to be one of those who are capable of both promising and bestowing fame'.<sup>27</sup> Further, Petrarch included 21 letters to 'Socrates' in his collection of *Familiare*s, two in his *Epistulae Variæ* and one in the *Epistole metriche*, while 'Socrates' can be encountered in the *Trionfi*, the *Vita Solitaria*, of which Petrarch

<sup>22</sup> Petrarch, *Seniles* I, 3, 14 (ed. Nota, 29): 'Socratem meum defles, quem michi, orbe alio genitum, primo statim congressu, frons, ingenium, virtus unanimem fecerant'; Petrarch, *Epistole metriche* III, 27, vv. 27–30: 'Tua dulcis, amice,/ interpellat item facies? sed forsitan æquum/ id fuerat, tua quum totiens me traxerit isthuc,/ ut mea te tandem semel huc rapuisset imago?'; Petrarch, *De vita solitaria* II, 14: 'sed ea semper lete frontis uniformitas quam in Socrate illo sene et mirari solemus et laudare'.

<sup>23</sup> Petrarch, *Familiare*s IX, 2 (ed. Rossi, II, 215): 'mirum in tam longe natis quanta vicinitas animorum, quanta sit coniunctio voluntatum'.

<sup>24</sup> Petrarch, *De vita solitaria* II, 14 14 (ed. Martellotti, 560): 'ille pars nostri est'.

<sup>25</sup> Petrarch, *Familiare*s IX, 2 (ed. Rossi, II, 215): 'Te ergo, quem cum aliis in consilium mittere solebam, iam solum hortor ut consulas: tu orator confutatorque, tu iudex electorque sententie, cui ego libens obsequor'.

<sup>26</sup> Petrarch, *Familiare*s I, 1 (ed. Rossi, I, 6): 'amicitie tue laus est'.

<sup>27</sup> Petrarch, *Familiare*s I, 1 (ed. Rossi, I, 14): 'Vellem ex his paucis esse, qui famam promittere possunt et prestare'.

sent to him a copy in 1360,<sup>28</sup> the *Seniles* and the *Laurea Occidens*, a bucolic poem in which a dialogue on Laura's death is staged between Petrarch and 'Socrates'.<sup>29</sup> Not surprisingly, in fact, for it was Sanctus who had informed Petrarch, then in Parma, that his beloved Laura, victim of the plague in Avignon, had died.<sup>30</sup> In his bucolic poem Petrarch even represented 'Socrates' as having been present at Laura's death and apotheosis.

Yet the historical Sanctus is also clearly present in Petrarch's letters, especially in those which were written during periods of long separation when Petrarch retired in Vacluse or returned to his native Italy. Various feelings and experiences found their place in a lively correspondence. Among them Petrarch's desire to live with his 'Socrates' is a prominent one. The humanist poet not only quoted Horace's verse—'Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens' ('With you I would love to live, with you I would gladly die')<sup>31</sup>—but, to show his deep longing in this regard, he also boldly asked Pope Clement VI that both he and his friend, 'who is to him like a brother and who desires to be together with him until death', might receive

<sup>28</sup> Petrarch, *Variae* 14 (ed. Fracassetti, III, 330–331); the date of this letter is uncertain. See Foresti A., *Aneddoti della vita di Francesco Petrarca*, Nuova edizione corretta e ampliata dall' autore, Studi sul Petrarca 1 (Padua: 1977) 464.

<sup>29</sup> See *Pétrarque, Bucolicum Carmen*. Texte latin, traduction et commentaire par M. François et P. Bachmann. Avec la collaboration de F. Roudaut. Préface de J. Meyers, Textes de la Renaissance 43 (Paris: 2001); M. Berghoff-Bührer, *Das Bucolicum Carmen des Petrarca. Ein Beitrag zur Wirkungsgeschichte von Vergils Eclogen. Einführung, lateinischer Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar zu den Gedichten 1–5, 8 und 11*, Europäische Hochschulschriften, Reihe XV/52 (Bern: 1991). For a discussion, see Papy J., "Petrarca's witte godin? Het *Bucolicum Carmen* XI en het graf van Laura opnieuw bezocht", *Lampas* (2005) [forthcoming].

<sup>30</sup> As Petrarch himself wrote on the fly-leaf of his Vergil-codex, a manuscript now preserved in Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, S.P. 10/27 (formerly A. 29inf.) fol. Av: 'Rumor autem infelix per literas Ludovici mei me Parme repperit, anno eodem mense Maio die xix<sup>o</sup> mane'. A facsimile reproduction can be found in *Francisci Petrarcae Vergilianus codex ad Publii Vergilii Maronis diem natalem bis millesimum celebrandum quam simillime expressus atque in lucem*, ed. G. Galbiati – A. Ratti (Milan: 1930). We follow de Nolhac P., *Pétrarque et l'humanisme*, 2 vols (Paris: 1907 = Paris-Geneva: 2004) II, 285–287. On Petrarch's Vergil-codex, see Billanovich G., "Il Virgilio del Giovane Petrarca", in *Lectures médiévales de Virgile. Actes du Colloque organisé par l'École française de Rome (Rome, 25–28 octobre 1982)* (Rome: 1985) 49–64; Alessio G.A. – Billanovich G. – de Angelis V., "L'alba del Petrarca filologo: Il Virgilio Ambrosiano", *Studi petrarcheschi* n.s. 2 (1985) 15–52, reprinted in Billanovich G., *Petrarca e il primo umanesimo* (Padua: 1996) 3–40.

<sup>31</sup> Petrarch, *Familiares* VII, 12 (ed. Rossi, II, 120); Petrarch quotes Horace, *Odes* III, 9, 24.

the income of all their benefices jointly so that they would be able to establish a *comitatus*.<sup>32</sup> This idea of a *comitatus* with friends such as Philippe de Cabassole, Ponzio Sansone, Guido Sette, and Sanctus, had been launched earlier in *De vita solitaria* (II, 14).<sup>33</sup>

However much these periods of separation weighed upon them, and however much others envied and tried to destroy their unique friendship, the unfaltering loyalty displayed by his 'Socrates' made their friendship, as Petrarch demonstrates, equal to those four famous examples from Antiquity mentioned in Cicero's *De amicitia*: Achilles-Patroclus, Theseus-Pirithoüs, Orestes-Pylades and Damon-Phinthias. Besides, Francesco Nelli, another of Petrarch's loyal friends, also testifies: 'Socrates, that new faithful friend, even a second heart to you, made dear by equable and straightforward disposition, and long familiarity'.<sup>34</sup> Finally, Nelli spared no pains to immortalize Petrarch's friend's loyalty: 'An unfailing artist and devotee of loyalty himself, he recognized the ardour of my own, as I can truly say'.<sup>35</sup> Thus, 'Socrates' has become the incarnation of Loyalty itself: 'if there is any probity and loyalty, they dwell in this man's breast',<sup>36</sup> he is 'one whose faithfulness in friendship makes him dear'.<sup>37</sup> Thus 'Socrates' became the very icon of friendship to the humanist and poet:

To be short, a friend is like a second self, he is the support that sustains us, the light of our mind, the guide of our judgement, the torch that lights our studies and brings peace in place of dispute, a sharer in our cares and troubles, a companion on our travels and a comfort when at home. He is a friend who attends us not only at home or in times of peace, but also in the country and times of war, on land and sea alike. And not only while we are alive, but when we after the

<sup>32</sup> 'qui sepe sibi exstitit loco fratris et secum usque ad mortem inseparabiliter esse cupit', quoted in Berlière, *Un ami de Pétrarque*, 41.

<sup>33</sup> See also Petrarch, *Familiares* XIX, 16 (ed. Rossi, III, 346).

<sup>34</sup> Cochin H., *Un ami de Pétrarque. Lettres de Francesco Nelli à Pétrarque* (Paris: 1892) 244, epist. XVIII: 'Socratem hunc novum virum fidelem ac secundum cor tuum, quem tibi equus et simplex animus longaue consuetudo conciliant'.

<sup>35</sup> Cochin H., *Lettres de Francesco Nelli* (note 34) 293, epist. XXVIII: 'velut infallibilis artifex, et summus fidei cultor, intrinsece fidei mee, licet enim fateri, inspiciebat ardorem'.

<sup>36</sup> Petrarch, *Epistole metriche* III, 27, 69–70: 'siqua est probitasque fidesque/Pectore in hoc habitant'.

<sup>37</sup> Petrarch, *De vita solitaria* II, 14 (ed. Martellotti, 560): 'Nosti hominem, quem et stabilis amicitie fides carum et Musarum multa familiaritas clarum facit; cum quo ita gaudium viteque iucunditas aderit, ut consilium non absit; ita vis ingenii vigorque animi ut, que his nonnumquam iungi solet, mestitie nulla nubes interveniat'.



funeral pyre he still remains a vital and immortal consolation, and this to the extent that the dead, in the eyes of their surviving friends, seem to live especially when they have departed.<sup>38</sup>

Petrarch's friendship with his 'Socrates' is not confined by the limits of death. The poet realizes that his own old age has begun when, in May 1361, he learns of his friend's death. He starts a new collection of letters, his *Seniles*, which he opens with the words: 'But I return to my 'Socrates' who will not return to me'.<sup>39</sup> Although death has taken it away, it puts a seal on their friendship. Hearing that 'Socrates' and his own son Giovanni had died, Petrarch wrote on the fly-leaf of his Vergil codex—the famous codex he used as his diary—: 'Lord Jesus, admit these two [. . .] into your eternal dwelling so that they who can no longer be with me here may by a most blessed transformation be with You'.<sup>40</sup> Referring to 'Socrates' alone, he concluded his note: 'Amisi comitem ac solatium vite mee' ('I have lost the companion and the consolation of my life').

Nevertheless, however important this friendship may have been, there remains the question of what it has to do with 'Socrates'/Sanctus as a reader of Petrarch's works.

### *Ludovicus Sanctus: an intellectual profile*

Petrarch's appreciation of his 'Socrates' was, as he stated himself, mainly founded on his friend's intellectual and personal qualities. In addition to Sanctus's musical competence, the humanist's appreciation extends to his general cultural and intellectual background. The

<sup>38</sup> Petrarch, *Familiares* IX, 9 (ed. Rossi, II, 239): 'Et ad summam amicus est alter idem, status nostri basis, animi lux, consilii dux, studii fax, dissidentum pax, curarum negotiorum particeps, peregrinationum comes refrigeriumque domesticum, neque domi tantum sed ruri militieque assiduus et terris et pelago, neque solum spatio vite par sed post busta vivax atque immortale solatium, usque adeo ut qui superstitibus obeunt amicis, tum maxime vivere videantur cum obierint'.

<sup>39</sup> Petrarch, *Seniles* I, 3, 14 (ed. Nota, 33): 'Sed redeo ad Socratem qui ad me non redit, nec me tamen animo deserit, ut puto, corpore licet abscesserit, cum unum et triginta mecum annos fidelis explesset amicitie'.

<sup>40</sup> Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, S.P. 10/27 (formerly A. 29inf.) fol. Av. We quote after de Nollac, *Pétrarque et l'humanisme* II, 285: 'Recipe, Christe Iesu, hos duos et reliquos quinque, in eterna tabernacula tua, ut qui iam hic mecum amplius esse non possunt permutatione felicissima tecum sint'.

eloquence,<sup>41</sup> the wide reading and open mind of his Northern friend all impressed the Italian humanist, and did so to the extent that he wanted him to be regarded as an Italian. In a letter to his loyal Roman friend Lello Stefano dei Tossetti—called *Lelius* after Gaius Laelius, the closest friend of Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus (185/4–129 BC) and central figure in Cicero's *De amicitia*—Petrarch once again played down Sanctus's Northern origin: 'Born outside Italy though he was, nobody lives a truer Italian in spirit and disposition.'<sup>42</sup>

One can get a first impression of Sanctus's learning and cultural baggage from the letters which Petrarch addressed to him—either in fact or as literary fiction. All Petrarch's letters addressed to his 'Socrates'—the letters written by the latter have not been preserved—are scattered with quotations and references from the Bible, from various Classical authors and Church Fathers. While Cicero, Vergil, Horace, Ovid and Seneca are prominent, Plautus, Terence, Sallust, Pliny the Elder, Apuleius, Lucan, Macrobius and St Jerome also occur in their correspondence. Even if this learned correspondence does not prove Sanctus's own erudition, it certainly reveals that which was shared by both friends.

Moreover, Sanctus's background of learning is well documented in another way. Giuseppe Billanovich has already studied several manuscripts which belonged to Ludovicus Sanctus himself.<sup>43</sup> One striking item from Sanctus's library in Avignon is the manuscript containing Cicero's rhetorical works and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, a manuscript which he purchased one week after his arrival in the papal city, viz. on 6 March 1330. The manuscript, composed in the 12th–13th century in (Southern?) France by one *scriptor* and now in

<sup>41</sup> Petrarch, *Familiars* VII, 6 (ed. Rossi, II, 108): 'facundia loquentis'.

<sup>42</sup> Petrarch, *Familiars* XX, 13 (ed. Rossi, IV, 37–43): 'Licet enim extra orbem italicum natus sit, nemo tamen animo et voluntate magis italicus vivit'.

<sup>43</sup> Billanovich, "Tra Italia e Fiandre nel Trecento" 6–18. Billanovich also offers photographic reproductions of some of Sanctus's glosses, such as the mark of ownership on fol. 57v of ms. Class. 261: 'Ego Ludovicus Sanctus emi hanc Rethoricam Marci Tullij Ciceronis in Avinione VI die mensis Marcii Anno Domini MCC-CXXX'. ('I, Ludovicus Sanctus, bought this Rhetoric of Marcus Tullius Cicero in Avignon on the sixth day of March in the year of the Lord 1330'). Other glosses are but small additions or indications of key-words (e.g. 'De exordio' (f. 7v); 'De narratione' (f. 8r); 'De partitione' (f. 9r); 'De confirmatione' (f. 9v); 'Quid sit tempus' (f. 10v). Sanctus also put a little hand (*manicula*) on fol. 32v thus marking the sentence 'Temperancia est rationis in libidine [...] (= Cicero, *De inventione* I, 26, 39: 'Temperance is the use of reason in passion [...])'!

the Biblioteca Classense of Ravenna, has several though small marginal glosses written by Sanctus. Remarkably, he used the same greenish black ink as the young Petrarch did, wrote in a similar *libraria*-hand, although not in an Italian hand, and in his manuscript formed his mark of ownership in a way similar to Petrarch. Obviously, Sanctus was well familiar with Petrarch's library in Vacluse, a library which is known that the Italian humanist loved to share with his friends.<sup>44</sup>

More important to our investigation here is the fact that Sanctus also composed his own manuscript collection. The Milanese manuscript Ambrosianus F 138 sup. is a striking illustration.<sup>45</sup> Here Sanctus arranged his own collection of Latin historiographers, among them Valerius Maximus's *Factorum et dictorum memorabilium libri*, together with C. Titus Probus's *De praenominibus*, Justinus, Florus, Sallust and Rufius Festus's *Breviarium rerum gestarum populi Romani*. A medieval chronicle dealing with rulers from Julius Caesar down to Frederic Barbarossa concludes the whole collection of 200 folios, which Sanctus himself introduces with his own *prooemium*. Beyond the fact that Sanctus used a similar ownership mark and that his locative 'in Avinione', used in such marks, no less resembles to the one used by Petrarch, this collection of Latin historiographers reveals a striking resemblance to the Latin historiographers present in Petrarch's library at Vacluse, a library which 'he had adopted like a daughter'.<sup>46</sup>

Yet the most intriguing way to get to the bottom of Sanctus's intellectual qualities is to have a look at his own writings. To form a clearer idea of the precise character of Sanctus as a 'reader' and intellectual *alter ego* of Petrarch, it is useful to inquire what kind of 'writer' he was in both his musicological treatise and his letter describing the epidemic of plague in Avignon.

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<sup>44</sup> Petrarch, *Familiares* XVI, 6 (ed. Rossi, III, 188–193), and *Familiares* XVII, 5, a letter to Guido Sette (ed. Rossi, III, 249): 'Utere libellis nostris, qui crebro nimis absentem dominum lugent'.

<sup>45</sup> Our account is based on Billanovich, "Il Petrarca e gli storici latini" 67–145.

<sup>46</sup> Petrarch, *Familiares* XVI, 1 (ed. Rossi, III, 176): 'quam in filiam adoptavi'. On Petrarch's library in Vacluse, see de Nolhac P., "Le catalogue de la première bibliothèque de Pétrarque à Vacluse", *Revue des bibliothèques* 16 (1906) 341–344; Ullman B.L., "Petrarch's favorite books", *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 54 (1923) 21–38.

Being a promising product of the *Schola latina* in his home town of Beringen<sup>47</sup> and of the famous music school at St Lambert Cathedral in Liège,<sup>48</sup> Sanctus had been selected to work in Cardinal Giovanni Colonna's *familia* in Avignon. This implies that he was not just anybody. Whereas his precise function in Cardinal Colonna's chapel cannot be defined—was he cantor, soloist, choirmaster, music teacher, or some or all of these at the same time?—his title *magister in musica* and the title of his early work, *Sentencia subiecti in musica sonora*, allow us to regard Sanctus as a master in solmization.<sup>49</sup> Yet which intellectual background is reflected in that short scholastically moulded musicological treatise, the *Sentencia subiecti in musica sonora*? In the first place, this treatise demonstrates the rich Liège tradition within which Sanctus places himself. In line with famous theorists from Liège such as Aribo, Johannes Cotto and Jacobus Leodiensis, Sanctus not only refers to ancient musicological theorists such as Augustine, Macrobius, Fulgentius, Boethius; he also includes Isidore of Seville, Guido of Arezzo, John of Afflighem, and Jerome of Moravia. In the second place, Sanctus's *Sentencia*, included in a manuscript containing great musical theorists such as Augustine, Guido of Arezzo, John of Afflighem, Boethius, Macrobius, Fulgentius and Isidore, also focuses on numerological philosophy, a topic exiting keen interest at Liège in those days. Likewise, Sanctus, who was well acquainted with Patristic literature and Scholastic philosophy, also applied Aristotelian and Scholastic thought in his own musical reasoning, itself related to Jerome of Moravia's *De subiecto musicae* and Johannes de Muris's *Subiectum in musica*, intended to demonstrate what the subject (*subiectum*) of music is: viz. the relation between number and tone.<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless, Sanctus's famous letter on the plague, written in Avignon on 27 April 1348 and addressed to his fellow canons at St

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<sup>47</sup> This is the view of Hamoir H., *Geschiedkundige aantekeningen over de latijnsche school en het College van Beeringen* (Hasselt: 1900) 7.

<sup>48</sup> Kurth G., *La cité de Liège au Moyen-Age*, 3 vols (Brussels-Liège: 1909–1910) I, 50.

<sup>49</sup> Smits van Waesberghe J., *Muziekgeschiedenis der middeleeuwen. Eerste deel: de Luiksche muziekschool als centrum van het muziektheoretisch onderricht in de middeleeuwen* (Tilburg: 1936–1939) I, 66–69 and 105; Welkenhuysen, "Louis Sanctus de Beringen" 414.

<sup>50</sup> Welkenhuysen, "Louis Sanctus de Beringen" 401–412 and 420, n. 108; Dykmans, "Les premiers rapports" 70.

Donatian in Bruges, also lifts a corner of the veil.<sup>51</sup> His eyewitness report, written as prebendary of St Donatian's chapter in Bruges and *procurator* of this chapter with the Curia,<sup>52</sup> informs his colleagues concerning the plague, its origin and ravages, and also the intentions of both the Pope and Cardinal Giovanni Colonna. It enlightens us too concerning Sanctus's intellectual culture. At a formal level his letter reveals a medieval Latinity interspersed with Provençal influences; at the level of contents his report is characterized by vague geographical knowledge, a strong biblical influence (e.g. the comparison with the Ten Plagues of Egypt and repeated echoes from the letters of St Paul and St John), and the use of classical *topoi* from contemporary literature dealing with pestilence (such as the pestiferous winds, the pathological characteristics of the Black Death, and astrological calculations). However important it may be to stress that Sanctus was writing to fellow clergymen and that this may have influenced his style, his Latin, both in his letter of 1348 and his treatise on music, is couched in a typical medieval and ecclesiastical Latin language, syntax and style, and has even been influenced by the Provençal dialect used in Avignon in the 14th century. His friendship of many years' standing with Petrarch did not make his style Ciceronian or his Latin humanistic—although it must be admitted that Sanctus's many letters to Petrarch (one of them announcing Laura's death) and his Latin poetry, all possible interesting testimonies, have not been preserved.<sup>53</sup> If one considers Sanctus's writings, one has to conclude that he remained a medieval man and is to be considered as the prototype of those numerous northerners who came into contact with Petrarch's person and work but only drew the medieval elements from it or what could be considered as such.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> A full analysis with a detailed commentary is offered by Welkenhuysen, "La peste en Avignon" 452–492.

<sup>52</sup> Sanctus had become a canon of St Donatian in Bruges on 22 May 1342; on 30 August of the same year he was appointed cantor of the St Donatian's Chapter in Bruges. See the documents quoted in Berlière, *Un ami de Pétrarque* 34–35. On the duties of *procuratores* with the Curia in Avignon, see Guillemain, *La cour pontificale d'Avignon* 567–572.

<sup>53</sup> A detailed survey of Latin letters or verses written by Sanctus is given in Papy, *Ludovicus Sanctus, vriend van Francesco Petrarca* 68–74.

<sup>54</sup> IJsewijn J., "The Coming of Humanism to the Low Countries", in Oberman H.A. – Brady T.A. jr. (eds.), *Itinerarium Italicum: the Profile of the Italian Renaissance in the Mirror of its European Transformations, dedicated to Paul Oskar Kristeller on the Occasion*

We are thus confronted on the one side with Petrarch who in his eulogies spared no pains to ascribe to his 'Socrates' characteristics such as loyalty, fidelity, open-mindedness and multifaceted cultural education and erudition. On the other side we are faced with Sanctus's own writings in which but little of Petrarch's influence is to be discerned.<sup>55</sup> Is Sanctus an ambiguous figure living most of his life in the lucrative clerical milieu of Avignon and adopting the standards and ways of the Church—even in 1348, after losing his patron Cardinal Colonna,<sup>56</sup> he decided to enrol in the theological school of Avignon<sup>57</sup> and to stay in that Papal city<sup>58</sup>—, yet, owing to his friendship with Petrarch, marked by the secular *studia humanitatis* which open the way to a deepened sense of the self in a world governed by divine law and free will?

This question brings us to another: to what extent is Petrarch's 'Socrates' the product of a literary atmosphere created by himself in his correspondence, and to what extent does the historical Ludovicus Sanctus correspond to the literary character 'Socrates'? A possible answer to this apparent paradox is to be sought in Petrarch's literary friendship with his 'Socrates', a friendship which was experienced as the friendship between Cicero and his Atticus and in which the literary layers were an essential part of Petrarch's perception of his northern friend.<sup>59</sup> If 'Socrates' is his 'theater', he is also his

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of his 70th Birthday, *Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought* 14 (Leiden: 1975) 193–301 (esp. 204).

<sup>55</sup> Tournoy G., "La fortuna del Petrarca nei Paesi Bassi", in Blanc P. (ed.), *Dynamique d'une expansion culturelle. Pétrarque en Europe XIV<sup>e</sup>–XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Actes du XXVI<sup>e</sup> congrès international du CEFI, Turin et Chambéry, 11–15 décembre 1995. A la mémoire de Franco Simone* (Paris: 2001) 583–594 (esp. 584) points at the possibility that it was Sanctus who, in 1333, opened to Petrarch the doors of the rich libraries in Liège so that he was able to discover the pseudo-Ciceronian *Ad equites Romanos* and Cicero's *Pro Archia*. Tournoy does, however, not forget to mention that Petrarch had an Italian friend in Liège too, viz. Matteo Longhi, Archdean in Saint Lambert, who, a few years earlier, had provided him with Statius's *Achilleis*.

<sup>56</sup> Cardinal Giovanni Colonna died on 3 July 1348; see, for instance, Petrarch, *Familiares* VII, 13 (ed. Rossi, II, 147–157) and *Canzoniere* 269: 'Rotta è l'alta colonna e 'l verde lauro'.

<sup>57</sup> Berlière, *Un ami de Pétrarque* 42–43.

<sup>58</sup> Despite Petrarch's letters describing the horrors of 1348 (*Familiares* VIII, 7; ed. Rossi, II, 174–179) and inviting him to Italy (*Familiares* VIII, \*2–5; ed. Rossi, II, 194–203).

<sup>59</sup> Petrarch, *Familiares* I, 1 (ed. Rossi, I, 14): 'tu olim Ydomeneus, tu Athicus, tu Lucilius meus eris'. See Papy J., "Francesco Petrarca en Ludovicus Sanctus: een 'Ciceroniaanse' vriendschap?", *Handelingen van de Zuidnederlandse Maatschappij voor Taal-*

‘Atticus’: someone with a broad interest in all liberal arts, an ideal adviser and judge, an amiable person full of *humanitas*, a fine and sensitive interlocutor, a loyal and honest friend, and, even more important, the literary critic involved in the selection of his letters and the making of his literary monument. As such, ‘Socrates’ was not only Petrarch’s intimate friend, he was also his ‘Atticus’, his first and ideal reader. If Petrarch felt compelled to stress that his northern friend Sanctus had been transformed into a true ‘Italian’ by their long and intense friendship,<sup>60</sup> Petrarch felt equally obliged to state that his ‘Socrates’, by their ‘humanist Ciceronian’ friendship, had also become an ideal humanist reader, ‘his’ first and invaluable reader.

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en *Letterkunde en Geschiedenis* 43 (1989) 87–98; Id., “Ludovicus Sanctus: Petrarca’s *alter idem*”, *Millennium: Tijdschrift voor Middeleeuwse Studies* 2 (1988) 110–117.

<sup>60</sup> In addition to the passages already quoted, see also Petrarch, *Familiars* IX, 2 (ed. Rossi, II, 215): ‘quem origo fecit alienigenam, mansuetudo animi et conversatio longior atque in primis amor mei magna italicum ex parte te fecerit’. ([you] whom origin made a foreigner, but the mildness of your soul, our longer conversations and my love in the first place made you an Italian for a great deal’); *Familiars* XI, 7 (ed. Rossi, II, 339): ‘quid refert unde ducas originem? animum magis intueor, quem plane italicum nostra fecit amicitia’ (‘what importance from where you originate? I care more for the mind which our friendship almost made Italian’); *Seniles* I, 3, 5 (ed. Nota, 31): ‘Barbarice nato homini rarum prorsus! Sed consuetudo longior et convictus assiduus nosterque amor sic illum moribus, sic affectibus nostris imbuerant, quasi media natus esset Italia. Noster erat, nostra omnia mirabatur et, pene iam oblitus originis, nil in terris nisi Italiam suspirabat’. (‘I am rarely direct to a man who is born barbarously! Yet our longer friendship, our assiduous living together and our love have imbued him with our customs and affections to such a degree that one would say that he was born in the middle of Italy. He was ours, he admired all that was ours and, having almost forgotten his origin, he breathed nothing in this world but Italy’).

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ANTIQUARIANISM AND POLITICS IN  
14TH-CENTURY AVIGNON:  
THE HUMANISM OF GIOVANNI CAVALLINI

Marc Laureys

Throughout the ages the grandeur of Rome has been praised by countless authors in a wide variety of contexts. The unique history and significance of the Eternal City as the political and cultural capital of a world empire as well as the spiritual center of Christendom prompted an unbroken chain of panegyrics that always embroidered concepts and motives that already in Antiquity had become canonical. Silent, but imposing, witnesses of Rome's glorious legacy were the ancient ruins visible all over the city. They determined to an important extent the urban landscape and constantly reminded Romans and visitors alike of the great tradition the city incorporated. From the Middle Ages onwards material remains from ancient Rome were consciously used in an attempt to revitalize the luster of the city and illustrate the continuing presence of its Classical legacy.<sup>1</sup> The first example, in which this intention is explicitly documented, is the so-called Casa de' Crescenzi, a house built probably between the mid-11th and early 12th century by a certain Nicolaus, son of Crescens and Theodora; the names of Nicolaus's parents, indicated in the inscription on the main façade, (were meant to) suggest a lineage going back to the noble family of the Crescentii from the 10th century.<sup>2</sup> One of the most prominent medieval private

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<sup>1</sup> Of seminal importance for the vast subject of spolia is Esch A., "Spolien. Zur Wiederverwendung antiker Baustücke und Skulpturen im mittelalterlichen Italien", *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 51 (1969) 1–64; see more recently, among other studies, De Lachenal L., *Spolia. Uso e reimpiego dell'antico dal III al XIV secolo* (Milan: 1995); Poeschke J. (ed.), *Antike Spolien in der Architektur des Mittelalters und der Renaissance* (Munich: 1996).

<sup>2</sup> The name of Nicolaus's father that appears in the inscription is, however, Crescens, not (as often erroneously indicated in modern literature) Crescentius. For a brief discussion of the Casa de' Crescenzi and its ideological implications see Krauthheimer R., *Rome. Profile of a City, 312–1308* (Princeton, NJ: 1980) 197–198; Claussen P.C., "Renovatio Romae. Erneuerungsphasen römischer Architektur im 11. und 12. Jahrhundert", in Schimmelpfennig B. – Schmutge L. (eds.), *Rom im*

edifices still surviving in Rome, the house stands out on account of both the conspicuous use of architectural spolia from ancient buildings and the many inscriptions that adorn the façades. The main inscription develops the theme of the passing of all earthly glory and the inevitability of death, but contrasts this moralizing message effectively with Nicolaus's fundamental concern in displaying ancient spolia on his house:<sup>3</sup>

Nicolaus, who owned this house, realized very well that the glory of the world did not have any significance for him. But it was not so much vainglory that urged him to build it, but rather the restoration of the pristine glory of Rome.

The renewal of Rome's splendor inspired by the presence of Classical ruins is, in other words, not an act of vainglory, but signifies the due cultivation of a historical legacy that rises above the contingency of time and space.

Less than a century later, the political potential of an evocation of Rome's glorious past came to the fore, when officials of the Roman Comune restored the Senate in 1143–1144.<sup>4</sup> Around that time

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*hohen Mittelalter. Studien zu den Romvorstellungen und zur Rompolitik vom 10. bis zum 12. Jahrhundert* (Sigmaringen: 1992) 87–125, at 119–122; Strothmann J., *Kaiser und Senat. Der Herrschaftsanspruch der Stadt Rom zur Zeit der Staufer* (Köln-Weimar-Wien: 1998) 78–84. All endorse a date 'around 1100 or shortly after' on the authority of Bernhard Bischoff and Rudolf M. Kloos. For the theory of an earlier date see the evidence quoted by Barbanera M. – Pergola S., "Elementi architettonici antichi e post-antichi riutilizzati nella c.d. Casa dei Crescenzi. La 'memoria dell'antico' nell'edilizia civile a Roma", *Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma* 98 (1997) 301–328, at 303; but they note cautiously (*ibid.*): 'In realtà l'epoca della costruzione, in base alle circostanze storiche, rimane allo stato attuale ancora incerta'.

<sup>3</sup> 'NON FUIT IGNARUS CUIUS DOMUS HEC NICOLAUS|QUOD NIL MOMENTI SIBI MUNDI GLORIA SENTIT|VERUM QUOD FECIT HANC NON TAM VANA COEGIT|GLORIA QUAM ROME VETEREM RENOVARE DECOREM'. These are the first lines of the inscription, which in its entirety contains quite a few problems of grammar, meter, and interpretation. Strothmann, *Kaiser und Senat* (note 2) 81, remarks oddly: 'Eine Übersetzung würde den Sinn unter Umständen einstellen, scheint hier doch eine rein inhaltliche Wiedergabe sinnvoller zu sein'. I, for one, fail to see any reason why in whatever possible case a paraphrase might make more sense than a translation. Strothmann's paraphrase of the first lines reveals at any rate that he seriously misunderstood the text.

<sup>4</sup> On the *renovatio senatus* see above all Benson R.L., "Political *renovatio*: two models from Roman Antiquity", in Benson R.L. – Constable G. (eds.), *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA: 1982) 339–386, at 340–359; Baumgärtner I., "Rombeherrschung und Romerneuerung. Die römische Kommune im 12. Jahrhundert", *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 69 (1989) 27–79; Strothmann, *Kaiser und Senat* 28–216.

appeared the *Mirabilia Urbis Romae*, a description of Rome most likely written by Benedict, a canon of St. Peter. Although date, authorship, and intention of this treatise have been debated intensively, it now seems clear that the *Mirabilia* arose in the same intellectual climate as the restoration of the Senate and reveal a genuine sympathy for the *renovatio* of the central institution of ancient Republican Rome.<sup>5</sup> Although the author of the *Mirabilia* used much material from earlier itineraries, composed for pilgrims who visited the city, and structured his work partially along the same lines, the *Mirabilia* in their original version were far more than a pilgrim's guide to the marvels of Rome. They bear witness to a specific understanding of Roman history and cannot be separated from the contemporary political background in Rome.<sup>6</sup>

The *Mirabilia* constitute the first major example of a distinct scholarly tradition surrounding the city of Rome.<sup>7</sup> They lay bare a sacro-historical topography of the city and emphasize the intimate connections between past and present, pagan and Christian Rome, documented through numerous, often providential or portentously revealed topographical coincidences.<sup>8</sup> In addition to this general pattern of exposition, illustrating the Christianization of the pagan city, numerous

<sup>5</sup> A sympathetic attitude of the canons of St. Peter towards the Senate is explicitly attested for a slightly later period, so that such a political orientation does not preclude the authorship of Benedict; see Strothmann, *Kaiser und Senat* (note 2) 223–227. The recent scholarship on the political orientation of the *Mirabilia* is critically and convincingly reviewed by Herklotz I., *Gli eredi di Costantino. Il papato, il Laterano e la propaganda visiva nel XII secolo*, *La corte dei papi* 6 (Rome: 2000) 215–217.

<sup>6</sup> The recent attempt by Nine Robijntje Miedema, therefore, to categorize and interpret the *Mirabilia* as a purely literary *descriptio urbis* fails to do full justice to all facets of the treatise: see Miedema N.R., *Die 'Mirabilia Romae'. Untersuchungen zu ihrer Überlieferung mit Edition der deutschen und niederländischen Texte*, *Münchener Texte und Untersuchungen zur deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters* 108 (Tübingen: 1996) 445–453. Before Miedema, the *Mirabilia* (as well as the *Graphia aureae Urbis Romae*) had been discussed as a special kind of *laus Romae* by Hyde J.K., “Medieval Descriptions of Cities”, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 48 (1965–1966) 308–340, at 320–324. The *De mirabilibus urbis Romae* of Magister Gregorius is treated as such by Zanna P., “Descriptiones urbium’ and Elegy in Latin and Vernaculars, in the Early Middle Ages. At the Crossroads between Civic Engagement, Artistic Enthusiasm and Religious Meditation”, *Studi medievali* 32 (1991) 523–596, at 577–582.

<sup>7</sup> For this contextualization of the *Mirabilia* see especially Seibt G., *Anonimo romano. Geschichtsschreibung in Rom an der Schwelle zur Renaissance*, *Sprache und Geschichte* 17 (Stuttgart: 1992) 164–177.

<sup>8</sup> See Kinney D., “*Mirabilia urbis Romae*”, in Bernardo A.S. – Levin S., *The Classics in the Middle Ages*, *Medieval & Renaissance texts & studies* 69 (Binghamton, NY: 1990) 207–221.

individual places and monuments evoked specific episodes from the history of the city, either legendary and fantastical or accounted for by ancient source texts. Even though focussing on the antiquities of Rome, the *Mirabilia* are essentially a historiographical work, in which history is recounted through a description of its material remains.<sup>9</sup> In this way, signal events and occurrences from the chronicle of the city were instilled into the beholder's mind, while the buildings and monuments he looked at served as mnemotechnical sign-posts.<sup>10</sup> This peculiar perspective goes back to Classical antiquity and is most extensively documented in Ovid's grand etiological poem about religious feasts and customs, the *Fasti*; significantly, the *Fasti* are the only Classical work explicitly referred to as a source text in the *Mirabilia*.<sup>11</sup>

This outlook continued to determine the historical discourse on Rome throughout the Renaissance. Narrative accounts of ancient Roman history were few in number, and never rose above the level of basic summaries, most likely composed for teaching purposes.<sup>12</sup> A scholarly analysis of the Classical past of the city was, as a rule, undertaken through an investigation of its topography and antiquities. Just as in the Middle Ages, history was keyed to a network of topographical coordinates, and the perception of history was conditioned by the appreciation of its material vestiges. The political poten-

<sup>9</sup> See Seibt, *Anonimo romano* 164: 'Man hat die Mirabilienbücher fast immer als Dokumente eines aufblühenden archäologischen Interesses interpretiert; es läßt sich jedoch zeigen, daß man sie besser versteht, wenn man sie als besondere, der Stadt Rom eigentümliche Form von Geschichtsschreibung begreift'.

<sup>10</sup> The mnemotechnical dimension of this kind of historical topography seems clear; see Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 5, 2: 'tanta vis admonitionis inest in locis, ut non sine causa ex iis memoriae ducta sit disciplina' ('Such a great force of reminding lies in places, that the art of memory is not without reason drawn from them'). It has not yet, however, been explored in depth.

<sup>11</sup> See Kinney, *Mirabilia* 210, with n. 25. Seibt, *Anonimo romano* 175–176, aptly adduces the eloquent testimonies of Cicero, *De finibus bonorum et malorum* V, 1–6 and Vergil, *Aeneid*, VIII, 310–312, but does not take the *Fasti* into consideration.

<sup>12</sup> Authors of surveys of Roman history include Giovanni Crivelli, Pier Candido Decembrio, and Andrea Fiocchi; they are mentioned by Voigt G., *Die Wiederbelebung des classischen Alterthums oder das erste Jahrhundert des Humanismus*, dritte Auflage, ed. M. Lehnerdt (Berlin: 1893) II, 490–491. Much better known and far more successful was Pomponio Leto's *Romanae historiae compendium ab interitu Gordiani iunioris usque ad Justinum III* (first edition published posthumously in 1499); on this work see now Niutta F., "Il *Romanae historiae compendium* di Pomponio Leto dedicato a Francesco Borgia", in Canfora D. – Chiabò M. – De Nichilo M. (eds.), *Principato ecclesiastico e riuso dei classici. Gli umanisti e Alessandro VI*, Pubblicazione degli Archivi di Stato, Saggi 72 (Roma: 2002) 321–354.

tial of this scholarly work, too, remained as vigorous as before: Roman humanists closely allied to the Curia created and consolidated a papal ideology, which presented the popes as the political heirs of the Roman emperors and rulers of a Christian realm that had harmoniously embodied the entire Classical legacy;<sup>13</sup> in so doing, these humanists effectively exploited their unparalleled knowledge of Roman history and civilization to adapt and refine medieval notions of *imitatio imperii*.

The basic change in this tradition that occurred during the Renaissance with respect to the Middle Ages was the growing acquaintance with a steadily expanding body of source material, both literary and archeological evidence, and the concomitant advance of historical consciousness and method. The first author who composed a detailed account of the antiquities of Rome and for that purpose turned with special attention to Classical authors is Giovanni Cavallini, a native of Rome and younger relative of the much better known painter Pietro Cavallini.<sup>14</sup> Between 1345 and 1349 (the year of his death) Giovanni Cavallini composed or at any rate finished in Avignon, where he was papal scriptor at the Curia, a *Polistoria de virtutibus et dotibus Romanorum*, an extensive survey of the topography, institutions, and notable historical events of pagan and Christian Rome, crowned by a detailed account of the relationship between imperial power and papal authority.<sup>15</sup> In terms of topographical and antiquarian expertise, Cavallini stands at the watershed between the medieval *Mirabilia urbis Romae* and the emerging scholarship of early humanists. But from the places and monuments he described he, just as others before and after him, elicited primarily the course of history

<sup>13</sup> On the connections between Roman humanist scholarship and the political ideals of the Renaissance popes see, among others, Stinger Ch.L., *The Renaissance in Rome* (Bloomington, IN: 1985) 156–291.

<sup>14</sup> For a biographical profile of Giovanni Cavallini and a discussion of his work see Laureys M., “Between *Mirabilia* and *Roma instaurata*: Giovanni Cavallini’s *Polistoria*”, in Pade M. – Ragn Jensen H. – Waage Petersen L. (eds.), *Avignon & Naples. Italy in France – France in Italy in the fourteenth-century*, *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici*, Supplementum XXV (Rome: 1997) 100–115, where all relevant earlier literature can be found. The first complete edition of the text is *Ioannis Caballini de Cerronibus Polistoria de virtutibus et dotibus Romanorum*, ed. M. Laureys, *Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana* (Stuttgart-Leipzig: 1995).

<sup>15</sup> For indications suggesting further chapters or sections of the *Polistoria*, that Cavallini possibly planned but failed to execute, see *Polistoria* (ed. M. Laureys) XX.

of the city. At the same time, he firmly and more explicitly than ever before set his account in contemporary politics by inextricably linking Roman history and antiquities to papal authority and exploiting that link to plead for a return of the papacy to Rome.

Even if Cavallini wrote his *Polistoria* in Avignon, his previous experience and career in his native city no doubt prepared him well for his scholarly endeavor. For we know that Cavallini, besides being a canon of S. Maria Rotonda, was also for some time one of the 12 rectores of the *Romana fraternitas*, a corporation uniting the local secular clergy of Rome. By 1325, when Cavallini is mentioned as rector in a papal document, the *Romana fraternitas* had definitely passed the peak of its power, but it nonetheless still exercised a considerable control over religious life and ecclesiastical matters in Rome.<sup>16</sup> Cavallini's position as rector made him intimately familiar with several facets of Roman social life and politics, as well as with the ecclesiastical topography of the city, since the supervision of divine services in the churches and the organization of funerals and processions also fell under the responsibilities of the fraternity. Less clear, admittedly, is Cavallini's place in the intellectual and cultural life in Rome. The title *magister* he used in Avignon does not necessarily imply that he had obtained an academic degree, but still most likely means that he had enjoyed some form of higher education, possibly at the *Studium Urbis*.<sup>17</sup> In what way, if any, Cavallini participated at the literary life in Rome, is a question that to date can hardly be resolved, as the

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<sup>16</sup> On the *Romana fraternitas* see especially Ferri G., "La Romana Fraternitas", *Archivio della Reale Società Romana di Storia Patria* 26 (1903) 453–466, as well as the documentary survey in Kehr P.F., *Italia pontificia*. I. *Roma* (Berlin: 1906) 8–14. Additional information and insights can be found in Barone G., "Chierici, monaci e frati", in Vauchez A. (ed.), *Roma medievale*, Storia di Roma dall'antichità a oggi (Roma-Bari: 2001) 187–212, at 204–208; di Carpegna Falconieri T., *Il clero di Roma nel medioevo. Istituzioni e politica cittadina (secoli VIII–XIII)* (Rome: 2002) 241–268. A full-fledged investigation remains a *desideratum*.

<sup>17</sup> On the interpretation of the title *magister* in the milieu of the papal Curia see Herde P., "Öffentliche Notare an der päpstlichen Kurie im dreizehnten und beginnenden vierzehnten Jahrhundert", in Thumser M. – Wenz-Haubfleisch A. – Wiegand P. (eds.), *Studien zur Geschichte des Mittelalters. Jürgen Petersohn zum 65. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart: 2000) 239–259, at 245–246. The intellectual level of the Roman clergy in late medieval Rome remains difficult to assess; for a very rich survey of the available evidence concerning the canons of S. Pietro in Vaticano, S. Giovanni in Laterano, and S. Maria Maggiore, see Rehberg A., "'Roma docta'? Osservazioni sulla cultura del clero dei grandi capitoli romani nel Trecento", *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria* 122 (1999) 135–167.

components of the literary landscape of Rome, i.e. authors, texts, and book collections, during the late Duecento and early Trecento are still in the process of being rediscovered and reconstructed on the basis of the available manuscripts.<sup>18</sup>

Of decisive importance for his work is, at any rate, the cultural milieu of Avignon, where Cavallini arrived between June and November 1325 to take up the office of papal *scriptor*. At the Curia, Cavallini never seemed to have risen to a higher function and altogether remained an inconspicuous figure; there is no evidence, e.g., that he ever belonged to the *familia* of a cardinal or other prelate. He took full advantage, however, of the opportunities Avignon offered as a flourishing scene of book trade and scholarship, eager as he was to assimilate the discoveries and philological work Petrarch and other scholars had accomplished there. In his *Polistoria* he quoted from the Fourth Decade of Livy, unearthed by Petrarch with the help of Landolfo Colonna, and in a codex of Valerius Maximus he had previously acquired (now Vat. Lat. 1927) he copied the treatise *De praenominibus*, associated with Valerius Maximus as Book 10 of the *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, and, again, rediscovered by Petrarch.<sup>19</sup> To that text he added the epistle with which Dionigi da Borgo Sansepolcro introduced his commentary on Valerius Maximus; the bulk of this commentary was almost certainly written during Dionigi's stay in Avignon (ca. 1330–1338).<sup>20</sup> Besides his Valerius Maximus, we still have one other codex that was once in his possession, namely

<sup>18</sup> For three interesting case-studies, including Giovanni Cavallini, see Petoletti M., “Nota valde et commenda hoc exemplum”: il colloquio con i testi nella Roma del primo Trecento”, in Fera V. – Ferrau G. – Rizzo S. (eds.), *Talking to the text: Marginalia from papyrus to print* (Messina: 2002) I, 359–399. One particular facet of this literary culture, namely the poetry produced in the milieu of the papal Curia in the 13th and early 14th centuries, is surveyed by Marco Petoletti in his edition and study of the work of Bonaiuto da Casentino; see his “Il *Diversiloquium* di Bonaiuto da Casentino, poeta di curia ai tempi di Bonifacio VIII”, *Aevum* 75 (2001) 381–448, at 385–393.

<sup>19</sup> See Laureys, “Giovanni Cavallini's *Polistoria*” 104, with n. 23. Around the same time, the Fourth Decade of Livy's *Ab Urbe condita* became known and was exploited in Northern Italy as well; for its use in the *Chronicon* of Benzo d'Alessandria, see Petoletti M., *Il 'Chronicon' di Benzo d'Alessandria e i classici latini all'inizio del XIV secolo. Edizione critica del libro XXIV: 'De moribus et vita philosophorum'* (Milan: 2000) 80–81.

<sup>20</sup> For a discussion of Dionigi's commentary see Schullian D.M., “Valerius Maximus”, in *Catalogus translationum et commentariorum*, vol. V (Washington, DC: 1984) 287–403, at 324–329; the dedicatory epistle is transcribed *ibid.* 325–326.



a well-known and important copy of the *Liber Pontificalis* (now Vat. Lat. 3762), whose previous owner had been Landolfo Colonna. A Vatican manuscript of Livy (Vat. Lat. 1846), furthermore, has recently been identified as an apograph of what must have been Cavallini's annotated copy of Livy.<sup>21</sup>

Whether Cavallini bought his *Liber Pontificalis* from Landolfo Colonna in person, during Colonna's stay in Avignon in 1328–1329, or only after his death, which occurred in Rome in 1329, this purchase at any rate situates Cavallini alongside Petrarch and Landolfo's nephew and Petrarch's friend fra Giovanni Colonna, who also received books from Landolfo's library, and thus shows that Cavallini firmly belonged to the milieu of clerical litterati, who moved between Rome and Avignon and shared a common interest in the cultural legacy of Classical Rome, brilliantly studied and recreated in that same period by Petrarch.<sup>22</sup>

Besides the presence and intellectual fervor of Petrarch and the extraordinary concentration of books, there is a third factor related to Avignon, however, that gives the *Polistoria* a peculiar stamp, namely Cavallini's strong emotional involvement, fueled by his separation from Rome, the dislocation of the papacy, and the perception of decay in his native city. The passionate impetus behind his work is obvious already in the annotations he jotted down in his Valerius Maximus. For although many notes deal with scholarly matters and either indicate parallel sources to a topic discussed by Valerius Maximus or otherwise document Cavallini's philological, historical, and topographical interests, many other notes carry an exquisitely personal flavor, evoking sometimes the memory of deceased family members, sometimes his pride in being a Roman, but most often his anger and disgust at the bitter struggles and conflicts in the Rome of his own days. Many observations are in fact harsh attacks against individuals, among whom also members of the baronial families

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<sup>21</sup> See Petoletti M., “‘Nota pro consilio Polistorie mee orationem predictam’: Giovanni Cavallini lettore di Livio”, *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 39 (1996 [published in 1999]) 47–76.

<sup>22</sup> There is no evidence to prove conclusively that Petrarch and Cavallini knew each other personally, as there are no explicit references in their respective works, but it is hard to believe they never met. It may be noted that Landolfo Colonna, who played such an instrumental role in Petrarch's work on Livy, is not mentioned once by Petrarch.

Conti, Savelli, and Colonna, and give a vivid picture of Cavallini's attachment to his own city against the background of its turbulent history in the first half of the 14th century.<sup>23</sup>

It is striking to see how Cavallini voices his opinion about his own times in the margins of his own Classical manuscripts. He directly connects his criticism of his own society with the ideas and values contained in the Classical authors. Specific passages from Valerius Maximus and Livy serve as point of departure for censuring contemporary Romans; events recounted by Classical authors are viewed and commented upon as a foil for similar occurrences in Cavallini's own time.<sup>24</sup> Classical history, therefore, is implicitly presented as a standard against which contemporary history is to be judged. The same attitude is documented in the books of other Romans of the early Trecento, such as Gentile Orsini and fra Giovanni Colonna, and points towards a new appreciation of Classical authors, who are considered, so it appears, discussion partners who hand over the norms by which society should be evaluated.<sup>25</sup> The direct and spontaneous way in which these Roman scholars conversed with their Classical authors sets them off from other commentators of Classical texts, such as Nicholas Trevet, Pierre Bersuire or Dionigi da Borgo Sansepolcro, all active (except perhaps Trevet)<sup>26</sup> in Avignon in the early 14th century. This emotional dimension of Cavallini's reception of Classical authors, furthermore, distinguishes him markedly

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<sup>23</sup> In previous scholarship on Cavallini, his notes on Valerius Maximus have attracted far more attention than his *Polistoria*; see the literature mentioned in Laureys, "Giovanni Cavallini's *Polistoria*" 112, n. 14. For a succinct appraisal see, besides the analysis included in my doctoral dissertation (*An edition and study of Giovanni Cavallini's Polistoria de virtutibus et dotibus Romanorum*, 2 vols [Harvard University: 1992] 1, 33–46), also Miglio M., "Et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma": attualità della tradizione e proposte di innovazione", in *Aspetti culturali della società italiana nel periodo del papato avignonese*, Convegni del Centro di Studi sulla spiritualità medievale. Università degli Studi di Perugia 19 (Todi: 1981) 311–369, at 359–366, as well as, more recently, Petoletti, "Il colloquio con i testi" 371–379.

<sup>24</sup> Dorothy M. Schullian, therefore, was absolutely right in being reluctant to consider Cavallini's notes on Valerius Maximus a "genuine commentary"; see Schullian, "Valerius Maximus" 334.

<sup>25</sup> See Petoletti M., "Il colloquio con i testi" 399.

<sup>26</sup> Trevet was 'lector sacri palatii' (see Weiss R., "Notes on the popularity of the writings of Nicholas Trevet, O.P.", *Dominican studies* 1 [1948] 261–265, at 264), but this may have been merely a honorary title; see Burnham, Jr. Ph. E., *Cultural life at papal Avignon, 1309–1376* [Doct. dissertation, Tufts University: 1972] 244, with n. 48).

from his predecessor Saba Malaspina, the only important Roman historiographer from the 13th century, who just as Cavallini was scribe at the papal Curia.<sup>27</sup>

Cavallini's annotations in his Valerius Maximus, furthermore, lead us directly to the scope and purpose of his *Polistoria*. Many of the scholarly glosses noted down there reappear verbatim in an appropriate chapter of the *Polistoria*, and, more generally speaking, the entire treatise is constructed on the basis of an approach and procedure, described as follows in a note at the end of the Valerius Maximus: 'He added with his own hand some parallel testimonies from the sayings of Livy and Cicero and several other historiographers'.<sup>28</sup> The *Polistoria* was designed and constructed as a systematic survey of such *concordantiae*, carefully selected parallel statements and evidence on all facets of the history and antiquities of Classical Rome. Cavallini announces and explains the literary format of his work in the preface, insisting on the abundance of literary material on the glorious history of Rome and the ensuing necessity for presenting a summary with well-chosen excerpts. In his statement he incorporates a relevant passage from Valerius Maximus's preface to his *Dicta et facta memorabilia*, thus revealing his adherence to the Classical Roman model *par excellence* for the process of *compilatio*, but also takes over a few phrases from the preface, with which Landolfo Colonna opened his *Breviarium historiarum*, an encyclopedia of world history, conceived in the tradition of late medieval Dominican historiography.<sup>29</sup> The borrowings from Valerius Maximus and Landolfo Colonna clearly indicate the literary context, in which Cavallini places his treatise. The *Polistoria*, too, is first and foremost a historiographical work, in

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<sup>27</sup> The single most important Classical author for Malaspina's chronicle was, quite differently from Cavallini's *Polistoria*, Vergil; see Koller W., "Vergil in der Chronik des Saba Malaspina", in Leonardi C. (ed.), *Gli umanissimi medievali. Atti del II Congresso dell' "Internationale Mittellateinerkomitee"* (Firenze: 1998) 297–306. Cavallini was familiar with Malaspina's work and quoted a passage from it in *Polist.*, 8, 4, 5; he most likely used the manuscript P (Paris, *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, lat. 5696), a miscellaneous codex, partly assembled in Avignon in the 1340s; for a description of this manuscript, which would deserve further study, see *Die Chronik des Saba Malaspina*, ed. W. Koller – A. Nitschke, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores XXXV* (Hannover: 1999) 42–52.

<sup>28</sup> Vat. Lat. 1927, fol. 93v: 'Aliquas concordantias apposuit manu sua ex dictis Titi et Tullii et plurium aliorum ystoriographorum'.

<sup>29</sup> I discussed Cavallini's principles and method of compilation in my "Giovanni Cavallini's *Polistoria*" 104–108.

which the city of Rome is described on the basis of what the available sources tell about its history, institutions, and monuments. In that sense, Cavallini continues and combines two specific variants of historiographical writing attested in Rome, the antiquarian type represented by the *Mirabilia* and the encyclopedic type, inaugurated in Rome by Martinus Polonus in the late 13th century.<sup>30</sup> The novelty of Cavallini's *Polistoria* lies in the selection and appreciation of his source texts. Whereas Landolfo Colonna in his *Breviarium historiarum*, as well as his nephew fra Giovanni Colonna in his *Mare historiarum*, still attempted to amass all relevant material from all periods, Cavallini conspicuously focussed on selected Classical authors to construct his account and endowed them with an exemplary status.

The literary background of the *Polistoria* elucidates both the affinity to and the distance from Petrarch's interest in Classical authors and Roman history. The strong invective used by Cavallini with respect to contemporary history and politics remind one of Petrarch's attitude. Among the copious annotations, with which Petrarch filled the margins of his books, one can find, alongside evidence of his philological work, much criticism of his own society and many attacks against individual persons.<sup>31</sup> He, too, obviously held up the Classical authors as a mirror for his contemporaries to contemplate. The historical writings of both Petrarch and Cavallini arose not just out of an interest in Classical Antiquity, but were also prompted by their dislike of their own times, just as their most important common model author, Livy, had produced his History of Rome 'from the sight of the evils which our age saw for so many years'.<sup>32</sup> But both in his reception of Classical authors and in his criticism of his own times, Petrarch of course went much further than Cavallini was ever capable of going. While Cavallini's scholarly annotations always deal with specific details extracted from texts that are considered authoritative, Petrarch's reception of Classical authors stands out above the similar pursuits of all his contemporaries not only on account of his

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<sup>30</sup> A third variant, less important for the literary format of the *Polistoria*, was the papal historiography, known as the *Liber Pontificalis*. The three traditions are distinguished by Seibt, *Anonimo romano* 66–67.

<sup>31</sup> An early example (if it is effectively Petrarch's) is recalled by Petoletti, "Il colloquio con i testi" 367, with n. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*, Preface 5: 'a conspectu malorum quae nostra tot per annos vidit aetas'.

unparalleled philological acumen, but also because he approached the Classical authors not merely as a paradigm for his own society, but above all as historical persons in their own context. His textual and source criticism of Classical authors always reached out beyond the specific passage at hand to the historical situation of the author and his work, and ultimately aimed at providing single contributions to a better global understanding of Classical culture.<sup>33</sup> As for the criticism of contemporary society, whereas Cavallini's invectives remained limited to punctual attacks *ad hominem*, pinned onto a specific passage of Valerius Maximus, Petrarch more than once developed his perception of Rome and his understanding of Roman history in a personal confrontation with an opponent, most notably in the Letters *Sine nomine* and in the *Invectiva contra eum qui maledixit Italie*.<sup>34</sup> Ultimately, Petrarch even molded the ancient rhetorical tradition of the invective into an instrument for establishing a place and defining the role of the nascent humanist movement within his own society, as he demonstrates in his *Invective contra medicum* and *De sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia*.<sup>35</sup>

The extent to which the literary exercise of *vituperatio* is made to bear on the perception of Roman history and politics allows us to reveal one further basic difference between Petrarch and Cavallini. Petrarch entered in discussion with opponents of various national, professional, and intellectual backgrounds. The wide variety of his antagonists was partly due, of course, to the tremendous resonance of his pursuits and writings, but also enabled him to formulate his humanistic program from various perspectives. Cavallini, on the other hand, is exclusively focussed on Rome and the Romans, his native city and his fellow citizens. The mere title of the work is a pro-

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<sup>33</sup> See especially Fera V., "La filologia del Petrarca e i fondamenti della filologia umanistica", in *Il Petrarca latino e le origini dell'umanesimo*, Quaderni petrarcheschi 9–10 (Firenze: 1992–1993) 367–391, at 373–378.

<sup>34</sup> The *Familiarium rerum libri* too, however, yield similar examples, such as *Familiares* IX, 13, in which Petrarch inveighs against his friend Philippe de Vitry, who had complained about the diplomatic mission of his protector to Rome. Petrarch's criticism of Philippe de Vitry's stance leads him to a (not very nuanced) discussion of the historical supremacy of Italy over France; see Crevatin G., "L'idea di Roma", in Berra C. (ed.), *Motivi e forme delle Familiari di Francesco Petrarca*, Quaderni di Acme 57 (Milano: 2003) 229–247, at 234.

<sup>35</sup> See Quillen C.E., *Rereading the Renaissance. Petrarch, Augustine, and the Language of Humanism* (Ann Arbor: 1998) 88–89. Petrarch's invectives are of central importance for the arguments Quillen develops in her book.

grammatic statement: the *Polistoria de virtutibus et dotibus Romanorum* is an extended tribute to the virtues and talents of the Romans. In the preface, he states that he wrote his treatise 'to the eternal praise and glory of the city of Rome',<sup>36</sup> and further underlines the unrivalled prestige and importance of Roman history: 'But if the histories of all nations are reviewed, the deeds of no nations shine forth more brightly than the magnificent deeds of the Romans'.<sup>37</sup> In the closing phrase of his preface (*Polistoria*, PR., 11), he proudly adds *civis Romanus* to his name.

First of all, this insistent focus on the city of Rome and its people enables us to associate the *Polistoria* to some extent with the literary tradition of the *laus urbis*. Far more than any other historical or antiquarian work dealing with the city of Rome, Cavallini constructs specific sections of his *Polistoria* according to the pattern of topics prescribed for a *laus urbis*.<sup>38</sup> The tone is immediately set in Book 1, where Cavallini elaborates upon numerous topical characterizations of Rome that had been developed from the Augustan age onwards. Its natural resources are extolled in the first three chapters of the final book (Book 10). The central part of his work, Books 6 through 8, devoted to the topography of the city, amounts to a celebration of Rome through its ancient and medieval buildings. Another important topic of the *laus urbis*, namely the character and accomplishments of the citizens, does not constitute a separate section of the *Polistoria*, but is rather omnipresent throughout the treatise. Particularly the glorious protagonists of Roman history, depicted in Livy's history and endowed with an exemplary status already in Antiquity, are evoked in various chapters of the work. Their function in the *Polistoria*, however, far exceeds the role they play in a traditional *laus urbis*.

To Cavallini's mind, these personalities are the direct forebears of the modern citizens of Rome. By evoking their memory, Cavallini tried to motivate his fellow Romans to live up to the tradition of

<sup>36</sup> *Polistoria*, PR., 1: 'ad laudem et gloriam perpetuam Romane urbis'.

<sup>37</sup> *Polistoria*, PR., 3: 'Verum et si omnium gentium istorie revolvantur, nullarum gentium gesta clarius elucescunt quam gesta magnifica Romanorum.'

<sup>38</sup> For an excellent recent contribution to the topic of the *laus urbis*, with very full references to previous scholarship, see Thurn N., "Deutsche neulateinische Städtelobgedichte: Ein Vergleich ausgewählter Beispiele des 16. Jahrhunderts", *Neulateinisches Jahrbuch* 4 (2002) 253–269.

their illustrious ancestors and renew the former splendor of their city. For he was convinced that his fellow citizens still possessed the virtues and talents of the Romans recorded in Classical literature and were able to revive the luster of old, if only they would live in peace and harmony, just as their forefathers:

On the subject of their virtues and all that has been said above, whoever will read through this entire work and the books of the historians and the chronicles of the poets and, just as Giovanni, the author of this work, will scrutinize them in depth, will understand that they not only once befitted the ancient Romans, but also become their modern fellow citizens today, *if only a lasting love for the peace in which we are living and care for civic harmony* would be upheld today among them, according to Livy's *History* 9, 10, at the end of the chapter.<sup>39</sup>

Cavallini's reading of the Classical authors and writing of the *Polistoria*, therefore, have an eminently practical purpose and intention, namely to restore and reactivate the ancient *virtus Romana* among his fellow Romans as a remedy against the distress and decay of his time. In his *Polistoria*, Cavallini reveals the fundamental historical continuity of Rome not only in the structure of its topography and the history of its monuments, as in the *Mirabilia*, but also, and even more importantly, in the outstanding qualities of its citizens. No wonder, then, that Livy is the most important Classical author adduced in the *Polistoria*, and that only the Bible is quoted more often than Livy's History of Rome: in the *Ab Urbe condita libri*, Cavallini found the most extensive and impressive account available in his days of the actors, who had laid the foundations of Rome's great past.

Petrarch's historiography certainly served a similar practical purpose. Petrarch, too, viewed Roman history *sub specie virtutis* and recreated it in his writings in order to heal his own society. That is why Petrarch's historical works, too, focus predominantly on the protagonists of ancient Roman history and hark back so clearly to authors, such as Livy and Valerius Maximus.<sup>40</sup> But here again, there is a fun-

<sup>39</sup> *Polistoria*, 9, 3, 4: 'De quorum virtutibus et omnibus supra dictis qui ad plenum predicta et ystóricos libros perlegerit ac crónicas poetarum et ut Iohannes orator huiusmodi opusculi ad plenum scrutaverit, persentiet non solum priscis Romanis ab olim competisse sed etiam hodie eisdem concivibus convenire modernis, si modo perpetuus huiusmodi quo vivimus pacis amor et civilis cura concordie haberentur hodie inter eos, secundum Livium .VIII. Ab urbe condita c. X in fine capituli' (Livy, *Ab Urbe condita* IX, 19, 17).

<sup>40</sup> This concept was, of course, also known in the Middle Ages and should, there-

damental difference between Petrarch and Cavallini. Whereas Petrarch intended his message to be heard by society at large, Cavallini addressed essentially the inhabitants of his native city, Rome. Petrarch admitted that ancient Roman virtue could be revived in Rome, when the Romans would only make the effort to live up to their ancestors, but he also observed that to date Rome was nowhere less known than in Rome itself.<sup>41</sup> The renewal of the *virtus Romana* was a task that every person should take to heart by reading and studying the Classical authors. Only on one occasion, Petrarch believed that a Roman was actually going to recreate the history of ancient Rome, namely Cola di Rienzo, whom Petrarch hailed as restorer of the liberty of the Roman people in a letter addressed to Cola, shortly after he took power in May 1347.<sup>42</sup> In this spirited letter (*Epistolae Variae*, 48), Cola is compared to the two famous liberators of the same name at the beginning and the end of the Roman Republic, Brutus who expelled Tarquinius Superbus and Brutus who murdered Caesar, as well as with other protectors of Rome, by whom Cola should remain constantly inspired through an incessant reading of the works of the Roman historians. In celebrating the new tribune and encouraging the citizens of Rome to lend him their full support, Petrarch assures, he fulfilled his duty as a Roman citizen:

So I have hastily grabbed my pen, so that in such a wide and numerous approval of the liberty of the people my voice may be heard at

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fore, not entirely be seen as a humanistic innovation. An eloquent example from the 12th century are the *Vitae abbatum* of the monastery Le Bec, written by Milo Crispinus; in his preface the author remarks: 'Among the ancients it was customary to erect statues of their own forefathers and to record in writing their famous accomplishments for the education of later generations, that is to say, as an example of virtue and an incentive for uprightness' (*PL* 150, col. 695: 'Consuetudo fuit apud veteres maiorum suorum imagines erigere et praeclara eorum facta memoriae scribendo commendare, ad informationem posteriorum, ad exemplum scilicet virtutis et incitamentum probitatis'); on this text see Gibson M., "History at Bec in the Twelfth Century", in Davis R.H.C. – Wallace-Hadrill J.M. (ed.), *The writing of history in the Middle Ages. Essays presented to R.W. Southern* (Oxford: 1981) 167–187, at 170.

<sup>41</sup> See the famous verdict in *Familiares* VI, 2, 14.

<sup>42</sup> Cola di Rienzo has been the subject of three recent monographs, which appeared in quick succession: di Carpegna Falconieri T., *Cola di Rienzo* (Roma: 2002); Collins A., *Greater than Emperor. Cola di Rienzo (ca. 1313–54) and the World of Fourteenth-Century Rome* (Ann Arbor: 2002); Musto R.G., *Apocalypse in Rome. Cola di Rienzo and the Politics of the New Age* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: 2003). Neither of them, however, treat the relationship between Cola and Petrarch in any particular depth.



least from afar and I may at least in this manner fulfil the duty of a Roman citizen.<sup>43</sup>

On hardly any other occasion, Petrarch perceived the Romans of his time to be so closely united with their ancestors of Classical Antiquity, and was so proud to associate himself with them.<sup>44</sup>

Cavallini, on the other hand, considered this bond an exclusive privilege of the Romans: by virtue of their Roman citizenship, they were the heirs of Rome's glorious past and assured the historical continuity of their city.<sup>45</sup> In his view, a reading and assimilation of the Classical authors did not create, but simply explicated the singular relationship between ancient and modern Romans. The Roman Cola di Rienzo, however, is conspicuously and strikingly absent from Cavallini's *Polistoria* and makes only one modest appearance in his notes to Livy.<sup>46</sup> On the basis of his absence from the *Polistoria*, the year 1347 has been posited as *terminus ante quem* for the completion of the treatise, but this chronological argument is not quite convincing, especially since the literary format of the *Polistoria* easily allowed the insertion of additional chapters.<sup>47</sup> Cavallini, furthermore, must have been familiar with Cola at least since 1343, when Cola visited the Curia in Avignon to implore the support of Clement VI for his political plans. Cavallini's silence as to Cola's political initiative is most likely a conscious choice, because he deemed it not compatible with his own interpretation of the political reality and the role and place of Rome in that context. Cola di Rienzo essentially intended to restore the *imperium Romanum* under Italian leadership and with Rome as capital; above all, he wanted to cut off any connection with the German Empire. Even if Cola chose for himself

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<sup>43</sup> Burdach K. – Piur P., *Briefwechsel des Cola di Rienzo*, Dritter Teil. *Kritischer Text, Lesarten und Anmerkungen*, Vom Mittelalter zur Reformation. Forschungen zur Geschichte der deutschen Bildung 2 (Berlin: 1912) Nr. 23, ll. 383–386 (p. 81): 'Itaque calamum festinabundus arripui, ut in tanto tam celebri libertatis populi consensu vox mea de longinquo saltem audiretur et vel sic Romani civis officio fungerer'.

<sup>44</sup> Petrarch was a *civis Romanus* ever since his coronation as poet laureate on the Capitol in 1341; see Mommsen T.E., "Petrarch's Conception of the 'Dark Ages'", *Speculum* 17 (1942) 226–242, at 233.

<sup>45</sup> See Miglio M., "La *Polistoria* di Giovanni Cavallini ed un manoscritto scomparso", *Roma nel Rinascimento* (1996) 5–14, at 10.

<sup>46</sup> See Petoletti, "Giovanni Cavallini" 70 and "Il colloquio con i testi" 377.

<sup>47</sup> Cavallini probably conceived at least some chapters that in the end did not materialize; see above n. 15.

the title of *tribunus*, probably inspired by his reading of Livy,<sup>48</sup> the elaborate and carefully orchestrated ceremonies with which he installed himself into power unambiguously suggested his imperial aspirations and soon prompted suspicion from the church authorities. His purifying bath in the baptismal tub of the Emperor Constantine the Great at the Lateran on 1 August 1347 all but offended and outraged the papal Curia.<sup>49</sup>

Reinforcing his political ambitions with the help of his historical and antiquarian knowledge and interests, Cola di Rienzo conceived and tried to execute a political program that aimed at reestablishing the universal authority of Rome and its citizens as the center of a world empire, ruled by an emperor who had received his supreme authority out of the hands of the Roman people. Cavallini, too, used the scholarship displayed in his *Polistoria* to convey a political message—but a quite different one. The final book of the *Polistoria* is devoted to the relationship between the pope and the emperor in their rule of the world. Not surprisingly, Cavallini maintains that the supreme authority is held by the pope, from whom the emperor receives his political power. He develops his thesis at considerable length, and in effect reiterates in detail the papal stance in a conflict that had been hotly debated throughout the first half of the 14th century and had opposed first John XXII, then Clement VI to Ludwig of Bavaria (†1347) during the years in which Cavallini was working on the *Polistoria*.<sup>50</sup> The question had prompted a flurry of treatises from both papal and imperial sides; interestingly, Cavallini dropped in his discussion of the problem the *compilatio* format he had

<sup>48</sup> As is plausibly suggested by Burdach K. – Piur P., *Briefwechsel des Cola di Rienzo*, Fünfter Teil. *Nachlese zu den Texten. Kommentar*, Vom Mittelalter zur Reformation. Forschungen zur Geschichte der deutschen Bildung 2 (Berlin: 1929) 90; see *ibid.*, 88–93, for a very detailed discussion of the various titles Cola awarded himself.

<sup>49</sup> Cola's spectacular exploitation of the *lex regia*, too, can be seen as a conscious response to the papal claims to universal power, asserted throughout the first half of the 14th century; see Miglio M., "Il Senato in Roma medievale", in *Il Senato nella storia. II: Il Senato nel medioevo e nella prima età moderna* (Rome: 1997) 117–172, at 162–163. On the legal action undertaken by church authorities against Cola see Burdach – Piur, *Kommentar* 245–252. On the associations Cola drew between himself and Constantine the Great, as well as his judgment on the Donation of Constantine see Seibt, *Anonimo romano* 135–142.

<sup>50</sup> For a brief evocation of the role of early Italian humanists in this conflict, see Billanovich G., "I primi umanisti italiani nello scontro tra papa Giovanni XXII e Ludovico il Bavaro", *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 37 (1994) 179–186.

adopted until then, and changed in Book 10 to a scholastic style of argumentation in accordance with earlier expositions of this matter.<sup>51</sup>

A particularly sensitive issue within this debate was the status of the papacy in Avignon. A number of Italian curialists at Avignon had stipulated that the papacy was inextricably connected with the city of Rome and had lost its juridical basis after its move to Avignon. In this way the larger church political issue also received a markedly nationalistic touch. Cavallini, too, defended this position, but, interestingly enough, brought his arguments for this specific point not in Book 10, but immediately at the beginning of his work, in Book 1, namely in the context of his basic idea of a fundamental continuity between the pagan and Christian tradition. Throughout the *Polistoria* Cavallini elucidated this continuity also in the institutions of the city. In a typological framework, he associated the papacy with three ancient offices, mentioned by Livy in his discussion of the religious reforms of Numa Pompilius (Livy, *Ab Urbe condita* I, 18–20), namely the *augur*, the *pontifex maximus*, and the *flamen dialis*. It may be mentioned in passing that by associating the offices of *pontifex maximus* and pope Cavallini anticipated the Roman humanists of the 15th century, who consolidated this connection.<sup>52</sup> More crucial to Cavallini himself, however, was the association with the *flamen dialis*, because this priest was obliged to reside in Rome; this obligation, therefore, had to be observed by the pope as well:

Outside of which (i.e. the city of Rome) the supreme pontiff is not allowed to stay even for one night, and how much blame, that is to say guilt, will the flamen, that is to say the supreme priest, incur, and

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<sup>51</sup> I have not discovered any single text, which Cavallini might have followed in particular detail. The papal position had been codified most clearly in famous and influential treatises, such as Aegidius Romanus's *De ecclesiastica potestate* (written in 1301–1302), and his follower Augustinus of Ancona's *Summa de potestate ecclesiastica* (written in 1320). Their arguments are repeated in numerous other tracts. On this whole complex see, after the groundbreaking work by Richard Scholz, especially Wilks M., *The Problem of Sovereignty in the Later Middle Ages. The Papal Monarchy with Augustinus Triumphus and the Publicists*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, new series IX (Cambridge: 1963). No major theologian was active in Avignon itself, after the doctrinal struggle surrounding the *Visio beatifica* was settled in 1335, as is noted by Burnham, Jr. Ph.E., *Papal Avignon* 296–297.

<sup>52</sup> The ideological significance of this association was, to my knowledge, first stressed by Kajanto I., “*Pontifex maximus* as the title of the pope”, *Arctos* 15 (1981) 37–52, at 46–51; id., *Papal Epigraphy in Renaissance Rome*, *Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae*, ser. B, tom. 222 (Helsinki: 1982) 62–63.

to what great extent will he cause the death of the state, when he lives abroad! And if his power could pass elsewhere, the nature of this place, however, cannot be transferred to another location, according to Livy's *History* 5, final chapter.<sup>53</sup>

In the same chapter Cavallini underlined the privileged status of Rome by suggesting a similar typological connection between two stories that evince the providential basis of this status,<sup>54</sup> namely the story of the Roman centurion, who after the liberation of Rome from the Gauls cried out the ominous message: 'Standard-bearer, place your standard; here is the best place for us to stay',<sup>55</sup> and the legend of the Apostle Peter, who, as he attempted to flee, returned to the city when he encountered Christ answering: 'I am going to Rome to be crucified again' to his question: 'Lord, whither goest thou?'.<sup>56</sup> Particularly this last legend had often been adduced to illustrate the providential character of Rome's capital status, and appears, e.g., in the decretal *Per venerabilem* of Pope Innocent III, one of the most powerful statements of papal sovereignty during the Middle Ages.<sup>57</sup> The peculiar associations proposed by Cavallini, however, were to my knowledge not suggested by any earlier author; the connection with the *flamen dialis* seems to be unique in the literature on the papal office.

Petrarch, too, often insisted in his letters and treatises on the necessity of binding both the offices of pope and emperor to the city of

<sup>53</sup> *Polistoria*, 1, 3, 3: 'Extra quam per noctem unam permanere nephas est summo pontifici [flamini Diali Livy!], et flamen .i. summus sacerdos peregre habitando quantum sibi piaculi .i. culpe rei que publice mortem contrahet (Livy, *Ab Urbe condita* V, 52, 13–14)! Et si virtus sua transire alio possit, forma [fortuna Livy] tamen loci huius alibi transferri non potest, secundum Livium .V. Ab urbe condita c. ultimo' (Livy, *Ab Urbe condita* V, 54, 6). In my edition I expunged 'mortem'; I now concur with Marco Petoletti ("Giovanni Cavallini" 56, n. 24) in leaving it in the text; see *ibid.* for a transcription of Cavallini's explanatory notes, copied alongside the relevant passages in the apograph of his Livy and in the oldest extant manuscript of the *Polistoria*.

<sup>54</sup> I discussed these texts in my "Giovanni Cavallini's *Polistoria*" 109.

<sup>55</sup> Valerius Maximus, I, 5, 1 (cf. Livy, *Ab Urbe condita* 5, 55, 1): 'Signifer, statue signum: hic optime manebimus.'

<sup>56</sup> 'Domine, quo vadis?' – 'Vado Romam iterum crucifigi'. The legend is first attested in apocryphal Bible texts; for references see my "Giovanni Cavallini's *Polistoria*" 115, n. 47.

<sup>57</sup> On this decretal and its exploitation in the later Middle Ages see Burdach K. – Piur P., *Briefwechsel des Cola di Rienzo*, Erster Teil. *Rienzo und die geistige Wandlung seiner Zeit*, Vom Mittelalter zur Reformation. *Forschungen zur Geschichte der deutschen Bildung* 2 (Berlin: 1913–1928) 249–255.

Rome; only when firmly rooted in the ground in which they were born, could they uphold their aspirations of universal power.<sup>58</sup> For Petrarch, however, this demand fitted into a larger historical vision, determined by a fundamental opposition between the Roman and subsequent “barbarian” domination of the world.<sup>59</sup> Petrarch set the decisive turning point of world history on one occasion, in his famous letter to fra Giovanni Colonna (*Familiars*, VI, 2, 16), at the move of Constantine the Great from Rome to Constantinople, and elsewhere, in an evocation of Roman history in the *Africa* (II, 274–278), at the demise of the Flavian dynasty, when non-Italian emperors first appeared on the scene. Both scenarios have in common a sense of the detrimental impact of the course of history on its natural and solely legitimate focal point. Radically condemning any concept of *translatio imperii*, Petrarch maintained that reinstalling papacy and empire in Rome would mean restoring universal power to the only rightful center of the world. Whereas Petrarch developed a new understanding of world history, focussed on the moral values and political prerogatives enshrined in Classical Rome, Cavallini exploited his Classical learning to find new arguments for endorsing the unlimited and unconditional supremacy of papal power. For Cavallini, the timeless and exemplary character of Rome as spiritual center of the world lay fundamentally in its status as seat of the papacy. His antiquarian reconstruction of ancient Rome was essentially meant to reveal the Classical foundations and origins of that status; beyond this point, world history and Rome’s place in it were of no concern to him.

In his study and exploitation of Roman history, Cavallini adopted perspectives and developed arguments that can be recognized throughout the ages in treatises devoted to Rome. More specifically, the *Polistoria* shares with all other scholarly literature surrounding the city of Rome some basic characteristics of the reception of Roman Antiquity in Rome itself. The presence of Antiquity in Rome always remained so powerful that Romans of any generation were tempted

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<sup>58</sup> See Piur P., *Petrarcas ‘Buch ohne Namen’ und die päpstliche Kurie. Ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte der Frührenaissance*, Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte, Buchreihe 6 (Halle/Saale: 1925) 78–82; Seibt, *Anonimo romano* 188–189.

<sup>59</sup> See Mommsen, “‘Dark Ages’” 233–239.

to appropriate the Classical past in order to appraise the Rome of their own times. The Renaissance in Rome, therefore, had been prepared more directly than in any other city by a continuous series of earlier renaissances.<sup>60</sup> Above all, the scholarly reception of Roman Antiquity in the Middle Ages prepared and influenced decisively the antiquarian studies of the 15th and 16th centuries in Rome.<sup>61</sup> For this reason, it is not easy to determine Giovanni Cavallini's place in the general climate of budding Renaissance humanism. It has to be stressed that one essential facet of the humanist movement, namely the renewal of the Latin language and style according to Classical standards, is entirely absent from his cast of mind. Beyond this linguistic concern, however, Cavallini's *Polistoria* owes much to the intellectual environments of 14th-century Rome and Avignon, and is arguably the first description of Rome that moves away from the *Mirabilia* in the direction that will lead to the topographical and antiquarian scholarship of the 15th century.<sup>62</sup> At the same time, nonetheless, it is also a typical example of a long-standing Roman variant of historiographical writing. However one defines the quintessence of Renaissance humanism, therefore, the *Polistoria* belongs to those writings that show that Roman humanism was not limited to nor indeed the same as Renaissance humanism in Rome.

<sup>60</sup> Rietbergen P., *De retoriek van de Eeuwige Stad. Rome gelezen* (Nijmegen: 2003) 48–49. The period immediately preceding the generation of Giovanni Cavallini, too, has been characterized as a 'Roman Renaissance'; see Frugoni A., "Il carne giubilare del 'Magister Bonaiutus de Casentino'", *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo* 68 (1956) 247–258, at 253.

<sup>61</sup> As was clearly perceived by Percy Ernst Schramm in his scholarship on medieval antiquarianism. See, e.g., his "Graphia aureae Urbis Romae", in id., *Kaiser, Könige und Päpste. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Geschichte des Mittelalters*, vol. 3 (Stuttgart: 1969) 313–359 [originally published in *Kaiser, Rom und Renovatio. Studien und Texte zur Geschichte des römischen Erneuerungsgedankens vom Ende des karolingischen Reiches bis zum Investiturstreit*, 2. Teil. *Exkurse und Texte*, Studien der Bibliothek Warburg 17 (Leipzig-Berlin: 1929)], at 359: 'Da die späteren Kopisten immer freier mit dem Texte schalten, so daß sich die Grenze zwischen Benutzern und Ausschreibern verwischt, wird sich eine erschöpfende Textgeschichte [der *Mirabilien*] wohl zu einer Geschichte des archäologischen Studiums in Rom auswachsen, die einen interessanten Beitrag zur Genesis und Entwicklung der Renaissance darstellen würde—denn welcher Autor, der sich mit Rom und seinen Altertümern beschäftigt hat, steht nicht in irgendeiner Beziehung zu den *Mirabilien* und ihren Ableitungen?'.

<sup>62</sup> In its mixture of medieval characteristics and traces of the new humanist culture, Cavallini's *Polistoria* clearly precedes the *Tractatus de rebus antiquis et situ urbis Romae*, attributed to the so-called Anonimo Magliabechiano (early 15th century), who, therefore, does not play the pioneer role accorded to him by some scholars, including, e.g., Accame Lanzilotta M., *Contributi sui Mirabilia urbis Romae* (Genova: 1996) 25–27.

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## „INTERPRES RERUM TUARUM“ – BOCCACCIO UND PETRARCA, EINE UNGLEICHE FREUNDSCHAFT

Ursula Kocher

### *Zwei Freunde – zwei poetische Standpunkte*

Am Ende des neunten Tages des *Decameron* bestimmt Panfilo, der neue König, das hochgesteckte Motto des zehnten Erzähltes. Es soll um Menschen gehen, die bezüglich Liebesdingen oder in anderen Angelegenheiten zu großmütig gehandelt haben. Als Vorbilder und Beispiele gelten für ihn Geschichten, die zu gutem Handeln anspornen, denn schließlich müsse jeder danach streben, nach seinem Tod in lobenswertem Andenken zu bleiben. Eben dieses Streben unterscheidet nach Panfilo den Menschen vom Tier, das sich nur um seinen Bauch sorge.

Die Novellen des zehnten Tages überbieten sich denn auch tatsächlich in Berichten von edlen Taten. Ein Exempel folgt dem anderen. Alle werden ernst genommen und heftig diskutiert. Bei den Gesprächen gerät jedoch die Frage völlig aus dem Blick, inwiefern die erzählten Handlungsmuster vorbildhaft für eigenes Handeln sein können. Bereits mit der zweiten Novelle beginnt ein heftiger Wettkampf um die Großmütigkeit der Protagonisten—unabhängig von der Frage, ob diese Großmut sinnvoll ist oder nicht. Bei genauerem Blick erweisen sich die Handlungsweisen der Protagonisten als nicht so beispielhaft, wie sie sein sollten bzw. als zu beispielhaft, um noch einen praktischen Lebensbezug aufzuweisen.

Dioneo persifliert die merkwürdigen Geschichten an diesem Tag, indem er seine als Anti-Exempel einführt:

Ich will von einem Markgrafen erzählen, keine große Sache, sondern eine irrsinnige Dummheit [*matta bestialità*], wenngleich am Ende Gutes aus ihr hervorging; diese empfehle ich niemandem zur Nachahmung, denn es war eine große Sünde, dass Gutes daraus wurde.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> „vo' ragionar d'un marchese, non cosa magnifica ma una matta bestialità, come che ben ne seguisse alla fine; la quale io non consiglio alcun che segua, per ciò che gran peccato fu che a costui ben n'avenisse“. Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*,



Auf diese Weise hat er die Rezeption der Zuhörer gelenkt, das Verhalten des Markgrafen wird von Anfang an kritisch betrachtet. Und das mit Recht, denn der Markgraf Gualtieri, der seine treue und liebevolle Ehefrau mehrfach höchst grausamen Proben aussetzt, empört und verstört bis heute die Leser. Letztlich verhält sich Gualtieri aber nicht mehr oder minder vernünftig als die Protagonisten zuvor – mit dem Unterschied, dass das zweifelhafte Verhalten der Hauptfigur noch vor dem Erzählen der Novelle offen angesprochen wird.

Was aber ist damit gemeint, wenn dem Helden der Griseldis-Novelle der Charakterzug der ‚matta bestialità‘ zugeschrieben wird?

In Dantes *Divina Commedia* erscheint dieser Ausdruck im 11. Gesang des Inferno. In ihm befinden sich Dante und Vergil im sechsten Höllenkreis, dem der Ketzer. An dieser Stelle wird erläutert, wie das Inferno aufgeteilt ist. Die Aufteilung ergibt sich aus den Begriffen ‚incontinenza‘ (Zügellosigkeit), ‚malizia‘ (Laster) und ‚matta bestialitate‘.<sup>2</sup> Es handelt sich um Begriffe aus der *Ethik* des Aristoteles.

Boccaccio kommentiert diese Stelle in seinen *Esposizioni sopra la Comedia* folgendermaßen:

Dieses Adjektiv ‚matta‘ setzt hier der Autor mehr aus Gründen des Reims als aus inhaltlicher Notwendigkeit, die von der Grausamkeit bestimmt würde. Deshalb kann man sagen, dass ‚bestialità‘ und ‚mattezza‘ eine ähnliche Sache sind. Es ist also diese ‚bestialità‘ einer schlechten Angewohnheit der Seele ähnlich, die, wie es Aristoteles im 7. Buch der *Ethik* gefällt, der göttlichen Weisheit entgegengesetzt ist.<sup>3</sup>

‚Bestialità‘ und ‚mattezza‘ sind für ihn demnach Synonyme. Sie sind mit Dummheit und Unvernunft zu übersetzen und stellen genau das Gegenteil göttlicher Weisheit dar. ‚Matta bestialità‘ bedeutet also nicht, dass Gualtieri sehr grausam und roh sei. Er ist nach der Meinung Dioneos blind und handelt unvernünftig. Er verhält sich wie eine *bestia* und kann absolut keine Exempelfigur sein, wie aus Panfilos Worten hervorgeht.

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Edizione critica secondo l'autografo Hamiltoniano, ed. V. Branca (Florence: 1976) X, 10, 3. Alle folgenden Übers. wenn nicht anders angegeben von U.K.

<sup>2</sup> Dante Alighieri, *Die Göttliche Komödie*, Italienisch und deutsch, übers. und komm. von H. Gmelin, 6 vol. (München: 1988) XI, 79–83.

<sup>3</sup> „Questo adiettivo ‚matta‘ posi qui l'autore più in servizio della rima che per bisogno che n'avesse la bestialità, per ciò che, e mattezza si posson dire essere una demesima cosa. È adunque questa bestialità similmente vizio dell'anima opposto, secondo che piace ad Aristotile nel VII dell'*Ethica*, alla divina sapienza“. Giovanni Boccaccio, *Esposizioni sopra la comedia di Dante*, ed. G. Padoan, 2 vol. (Milan: 1994) 551.

Griseldis dagegen bleibt von Anfang bis Ende ein lebendig gewordenes Exempel. Sie wird geschildert und behandelt wie das personifizierte Beispiel der Tugendhaftigkeit, eine Puppe, erschaffen vom Erzähler und der Hauptfigur Gualtieri. Gerade dadurch wird Griseldis aber zur einzigartigen Dulderin. Ihre extreme Form des Akzeptierens ist an der Grenze des Vernünftigen. Weder der Markgraf noch Griseldis eignen sich deshalb als Exempel.

Entsprechend sind die Leser bis heute irritiert. Ihnen wird eine Erzählung geboten, die zwar als Exempel gestaltet ist, jedoch als Anti-Exempel bewertet wird und zudem einen Erzähler hat, der sich während des ganzen *Decameron* als unzuverlässig erweist und der von seinem Redegegenstand selbst absolut nicht überzeugt ist. Dieses narrative Merkmal öffnet die Novelle einer Vielzahl von Interpretationen. Sie ist trotz exemplarhaft-klarer Sprache nicht eindeutig zu verstehen und soll das auch gar nicht sein.

Diese Ausführungen zeigen zweierlei: Erstens kann man aus der Beschäftigung mit dieser Novelle erneut feststellen, wie intensiv sich Boccaccio mit Dante auseinandergesetzt und wie sehr er dessen Darlegungen mit seinen eigenen Gedanken verbunden hat. Dante Alighieri war eines der Vorbilder für Boccaccio, dem er neben der Kommentierung seiner *Comedia* eine Biografie widmete. Petrarca, ein nicht minder großes Vorbild für den jüngeren Boccaccio, war diese Vorliebe allerdings ein Dorn im Auge. Eine Antwort auf die Frage, weshalb Petrarca dieser Wertschätzung Dantes durch Boccaccio skeptisch gegenüberstand, wird weiter unten noch gegeben.

Zweitens gibt gerade die *Griseldis*-Novelle einen guten Einblick in Boccaccios Verständnis von literarischen Texten, der Rolle des Autors und von volkssprachlichen Novellen im Besonderen. Literatur ist für ihn – ob in lateinischer oder in italienischer Sprache verfasst – gleichermaßen ein Anlass für den Leser, unter die Oberfläche zu blicken. Erzählungen enthalten für ihn „unter der Schale der Fiktion ein Beispiel oder eine Lehre [. . .]. Wenn die Hülle entfernt ist, liegt die Absicht des Erzählers offen“.<sup>4</sup> Die narrative Offenheit eines Textes

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<sup>4</sup> Hege B., *Boccaccios Apologie der heidnischen Dichtung in den ‚Genealogie deorum gentium‘*, Buch XIV: Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar und Abhandlung (Tübingen: 1997) 71: „Fabula est exemplaris seu demonstrativa sub figmento locutio, cuius amoto cortice, patet intentio fabulantis“ (70). In dieser Hinsicht ist Boccaccio natürlich nicht originell. Es handelt sich um eine beliebte Argumentation, die Dichtung zu verteidigen. Übernommen werden im Folgenden im wesentlichen die Übersetzungen

ist nach seinem Verständnis eine Einladung für den Rezipienten, sich mit dem Geschriebenen intensiv auseinander zu setzen und Widersprüchen nachzuspüren.

Petrarca bearbeitete die *Griseldis* und beseitigte dabei die Offenheit der *Decameron*-Erzählung. Er verwandelte das Pseudo-Exempel in einen moralphilosophischen, lateinischen Traktat. Die lateinische *Griselda* ist als *narratio*-Teil an einen Brief angebunden. Dieser Brief vom März 1373 ist an Giovanni Boccaccio gerichtet und beschreibt, wie Petrarca das *Decameron* überflogen und Gefallen an der letzten Geschichte gefunden habe.<sup>5</sup>

Ansonsten hat Petrarca einiges am *Decameron* auszusetzen, was er seinem Freund allerdings verzeihen kann, da dieser zur Zeit der Abfassung noch jung gewesen sei und sein anvisiertes Publikum wohl ein derartiges Schreiben erfordert habe.<sup>6</sup> Unter dem Mantel des Verzeihens kritisiert Petrarca damit genau das, was das *Decameron* auszeichnet: Vielfalt in jeder Hinsicht. Eben diese löst jedoch, wie schon gezeigt, Interpretationsprobleme aus.

Die *Griseldis*-Geschichte kannte Petrarca bereits vor seiner *Decameron*-Lektüre, und er konnte ermessen, was für eine große Wirkung sie auf Zuhörer und Leser ausüben musste. Aus diesem Grund schien es ihm wichtig, sie in eine Sprache zu übertragen, die über die Grenzen Italiens hinaus verstanden werden konnte:

Zum anderen aber habe ich die letzte Geschichte den vielen vorangehenden bei weitem als unvergleichlich empfunden, sie hat mir so gefallen und mich so gefesselt, dass ich zwischen so vielen Aufgaben, die mich kaum meiner selbst eingedenk sein lassen, sie dem Gedächtnis erhalten wollte, damit ich—so oft ich selbst Neigung dazu hätte—sie nicht ohne Vergnügen wiederholen könnte und traulich plaudernden Freunden—wie es vorkommt—wiedererzählte, wenn irgendwann sich hierzu solche Gelegenheit ergeben könnte. Da solche Erwägung, wenn ich bald darauf

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Heges. An einzelnen Stellen wurde in die Übertragung jedoch stillschweigend eingegriffen, wenn eine treffendere Übersetzung naheliegender schien. Vgl. auch die Ausgabe der *Genealogie* in der italienischen Gesamtausgabe [Giovanni Boccaccio, *Genealogie deorum gentilium*, 2 vol., ed. V. Zaccaria (Mailand: 1998)].

<sup>5</sup> „Excucurri eum, et festini viatoris in morem, hinc atque hinc circumspiciens, nec substinens“. Siehe Giovanni Boccaccio – Francesco Petrarca, *Griselda*, ed. L.C. Rossi (Palermo: 1991) 75.

<sup>6</sup> „Delectatus sum ipso in transitu; et si quid lascivie liberioris occurreret, excusabat etas tunc tua dum id scriberes, stilus, ydioma, ipsa quoque rerum levitas et eorum qui lecturi talia videbantur. Refert enim largiter quibus scribas, morumque varietate stili varietas excusatur“. Siehe Boccaccio – Petrarca, *Griselda* 75.

dies getan und Zuhörern die anmutige Geschichte vorgetragen hätte, einen Widersprechenden unvermutet überrascht hätte, konnte es geschehen, dass die liebliche Geschichte mit unserer Art zu reden nicht Vertraute überaus Freude bereitete, weil die vor langen Jahren gehörte Geschichte auch mir immer gefiel.<sup>7</sup>

Er entnahm also, wie es auch viele *Decameron*-Rezipienten nach ihm tun sollten, der komplexen Novellensammlung Boccaccios eine Geschichte und gestaltete sie nach seinen Vorstellungen in lateinischer Sprache um. Dabei verstand er sich als *interpret* und behauptete, er habe die Novelle Boccaccios einfach übertragen, nicht neu erzählt, und nur an wenigen Stellen andere Formulierungen gewählt oder welche hinzugefügt.<sup>8</sup>

Tatsächlich verharmlost Petrarca hier enorm. Seine Veränderungen am Text verwandeln die *Griseldis* in ein christliches Exempel nach antikem Vorbild. „Griseldas Verhalten Gualtieri gegenüber wird zum Anlaß genommen, beispielhaft die menschlichen Tugenden *obedientia* und *fides* darzustellen, die Griseldis in so unvergleichlicher Weise verkörpert“.<sup>9</sup> Textliche Veränderungen, die gemäß der gewünschten Lehre unternommen wurden, machen die Interpretation des Textes eindeutig. Letzte Zweifel werden durch den Schlussteil ausgeräumt, einer Art Nachwort, in dem Petrarca die Intention seiner ‚Übertragung‘ angibt: Die Standhaftigkeit dieser Frau soll nachgeahmt werden.

Diese Geschichte ist jetzt anscheinend durch einen anderen Stil erneuert worden, nicht so sehr dadurch, dass die Ehefrauen unserer Zeit die Duldsamkeit dieser Gemahlin, die mir kaum nachahmbar zu sein scheint, nachahmen, als vielmehr dass sie wenigstens die Charakterfestigkeit der Frau wählen. Ich rufe dazu auf, dass sie es wagen, sich vor unserem Herrn darin auszuzeichnen, worin diese ihren Ehemann übertrifft.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> „In altero autem ystoriam ultimam et multis precedencium longe dissimilem posuisti, que ita michi placuit meque detinuit ut, inter tot curas que pene mei ipsius immemorem me fecere, illam memorie mandare voluerim, ut et ipse eam animo quociens vellem non sine voluptate repeterem, et amicis ut fit confabulantibus renarrarem, si quando aliquid tale incidisset. Quod cum brevi postmodum fecissem gratamque audientibus cognovissem, subito talis interloquendum cogitatio supervenit, fieri posse ut nostri etiam sermonis ignaros tam dulcis ystoria delectaret, cum et michi semper ante multos annos audita placuisset [...]“. Siehe Boccaccio – Petrarca, *Griselda* 75f.

<sup>8</sup> „historiam tuam meis verbis explicui, imo alicubi aut paucis in ipsa narratione mutatis verbis aut additis, [...]“. Siehe Boccaccio – Petrarca, *Griselda* 76.

<sup>9</sup> Bertelsmeier-Kierst C., ‚*Griseldis*‘ in *Deutschland. Studien zu Steinhöwel und Arigo*, GRM-Beiheft 8 (Heidelberg: 1988) 129.

<sup>10</sup> „Hanc historiam stilo nunc alio retexere visum fuit, non tam ideo ut matronas

Petrarca erfüllt in vorbildlicher Weise, was sich Panfilo im *Decameron* von seiner Brigata am zehnten Tag gewünscht hatte. Er liefert ein Exempel, dessen Lehre eindeutig bestimmbar ist. Was bei Petrarca neu ist und bei Boccaccio bestenfalls interpretativ erschlossen werden kann, ist die Parallelisierung des Verhaltens der Griseldis zu ihrem Mann mit dem des Menschen zu Gott. „Petrarca hebt damit die Novelle auf die Ebene eines religiösen Gleichnisses, bei der Griseldis beispielhaft das Verhalten des Menschen zu Gott symbolisieren soll“.<sup>11</sup> Damit wird Griseldis gleichzeitig weniger zu einem Vorbild für jede Ehefrau, sondern gibt Anlass zum Nachdenken über das eigene Leben. „So zielt die Erzählung nach ihrer wahren Bedeutung auf Selbsterkenntnis und Bewährung des Menschen in seiner *Condicio humana*“.<sup>12</sup>

Sollte Gualtieri jedoch für den Leser als quasi-göttliche Instanz erkennbar sein, deren Walten zunächst undurchschaubar, aber letztlich einsichtig ist, muss die Figur anders gestaltet werden.

Die Exemplifizierung eines theoretischen Postulats [...] soll dem Menschen eine konkrete Möglichkeit und deren Realisierbarkeit und Nachahmbarkeit vorführen. Um eine Identifikation möglich zu machen und damit die didaktische Wirksamkeit zu steigern, muß das Exemplum historisch bezeugt oder durch Lebensnähe und in der Folge durch gesteigerten erzählerischen Realismus wahrscheinlich gemacht werden.<sup>13</sup>

Ursula Hess hat die wesentlichen Veränderungen in Petrarcas Erzählung gegenüber derjenigen Boccaccios genannt. Auffällig ist die ausführliche Landschaftsbeschreibung am Anfang, „die die piemontesische Landschaft von einem imaginären Standort aus überblickt und den Blick über die Poebene hin bis zum adriatischen Meer erweitert“.<sup>14</sup> Sie diene, so Hess, als Einführung in eine Novelle, die

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nostri temporis ad imitandam huius uxoris patientiam, que michi vix imitabilis videtur, quam ut legentes ad imitandam saltem femine constantiam excitarem, ut quod hec viro suo prestitit, hoc prestare Deo nostro audeant; [...].“ Siehe Boccaccio – Petrarca, *Griselda* 61f.

<sup>11</sup> Bertelsmeier-Kierst C., *„Griseldis“ in Deutschland* 130.

<sup>12</sup> Worstbrock F.-J., „Petrarcas ‚Griseldis‘ und ihre Poetik“, in Grubmüller K. – Schmidt-Wiegand R. – Speckenbach K. (Hrsg.), *Geistliche Denkformen des Mittelalters* (Münster: 1984) 245–256 (252).

<sup>13</sup> Knappe J., *De oboedientia et fide uxoris. Petrarca humanistisch-moralisches Exempel ‚Griseldis‘ und seine frühe deutsche Rezeption* (Göttingen: 1978) 44. Zu der Auseinandersetzung Petrarca mit dem Unterschied zwischen *fabula* und *historia* generell sowie speziell mit der Wahrheit von Boccaccios Novelle vgl. ebd. 42ff.

<sup>14</sup> Stierle K., *Petrarcas Landschaften. Zur Geschichte ästhetischer Landschaftserfahrung* (Krefeld: 1979) 31.

nun nicht mehr in einen Rahmen eingebettet ist, und vermittele dem Rezipienten außerhalb Italiens einen Eindruck von der Landschaft, in dem die Geschichte angesiedelt wird. Zudem unterstreiche Petrarca mit diesem Anfang den „Wahrheits- und Neuigkeitsgehalt seiner Fassung“.<sup>15</sup> Dieser Aspekt ist der wichtigere. Die Landschaftsbeschreibung weist den Rezipienten auf die Diskurstradition hin, in der sich Petrarca bewegt. Wollte er ein christlich-mittelalterliches Exempel verfassen, müsste er mit einer Moral beginnen, in der bereits erste Hinweise für das Lesen der nachfolgenden Erzählung zu finden sind. So aber bezieht er sich auf die antike Literatur, vor allem die Geschichtsschreibung, und beginnt die Novelle mit einer Beschreibung, wie man sie ähnlich bei Vergil, Livius, Tacitus oder Plinius dem Jüngeren finden könnte.<sup>16</sup>

Die Landschaftsschilderung, mit der Petrarca beginnt, unterwirft den Leser einem ästhetischen Eindruck, der aufs Ganze wirkt, einem Schönheit und Würde vermittelnden Eindruck, den Boccaccios Erzählung an keiner Stelle aufkommen läßt, der ihrem Geist der Desidealisierung zutiefst fremd ist.<sup>17</sup>

Eine weitere Änderung betrifft die Figur des Markgrafen Valterius, der sehr viel positiver dargestellt wird.

Mit Ausnahme der Jagdleidenschaft, die seine vitalen Kräfte und Interessen so absorbiert, daß er darüber die landesväterlichen Pflichten als Erzeuger eines Thronerben vergißt, stellt ihn Petrarca als untadeligen Mann dar: Jugendlich an Gestalt und Jahren und nicht weniger durch Charakter als durch Herkunft edel und alles in allem in jeder Hinsicht ein ausgezeichneter Mann. („forma virens atque etate, nec minus moribus quam sanguine nobilis et ad summam omni ex parte vir insignis [ . . . ]“)<sup>18</sup>

Der Einschätzung von Hess, die Persönlichkeitsschilderung des Valterius bringe keinen „Zuwachs an Individualität gegenüber Boccaccio“,<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Hess U., *Heinrich Steinhöwels ‚Griseldis‘. Studien zur Text- und Überlieferungsgeschichte einer frühhumanistischen Prosanovelle* (München: 1975) 113.

<sup>16</sup> Nicht umsonst wird Vergil in dieser Exposition erwähnt: „fluviorum a Virgilio rex dictus“. Siehe Boccaccio – Petrarca, *Griselda* 29, 1.

<sup>17</sup> Worstbrock, „Petrarcas ‚Griseldis‘“ 247. Insistieren muss man an dieser Stelle darauf, dass Dioneo, nicht Boccaccio, der Erzähler der Novelle ist. Boccaccio hätte sie isoliert an anderer Stelle eventuell ebenfalls ganz anders erzählt.

<sup>18</sup> Hess, *Heinrich Steinhöwels ‚Griseldis‘* 113f.

<sup>19</sup> Hess, *Heinrich Steinhöwels ‚Griseldis‘* 114.

ist nur bedingt zuzustimmen. Natürlich sind die Attribute an dieser Stelle topisch. Individualität erreicht man in einer Erzählung aber nicht nur über die Zuweisung von positiven oder negativen Eigenschaften.

Valterius handelt menschlicher, überlegter und vorausschauender. Er gibt den Forderungen der Untertanen nicht sofort nach (wie Gualtieri), sondern hört sich die Rede eines Sprechers an, der von hoher Geburt ist und über Beredsamkeit verfügt. Dann antwortet er ausführlich und sachlich, bevor er, bewegt von den Worten des Sprechers, nachgibt. Er vertraut darauf, dass Gott ihm die richtige Frau zuführt.<sup>20</sup>

Auch die Figur der Griseldis wird von Petrarca umgestaltet. Sie wird nach der Hochzeit zur perfekten Ehefrau eines Fürsten, die sich in der Abwesenheit ihres Mannes sogar als Regentin hervortut, so dass man im Volk glaubt, sie sei vom Himmel geschickt worden.<sup>21</sup> In drei längeren, sich steigernden Reden in der Erzählung beweist sie außerdem, dass sie denken und handeln kann. Sie ist keine wesenslose Puppe wie Boccaccios Griseldis. Und doch hat der Leser nie Einblick in ihr Gefühlsleben. Ihre Emotionen werden stets von einem dominanten Erzähler mitgeteilt und äußern sich entweder in Selbstbeherrschung oder in Gebärden, die auf Gefühle schließen lassen, wie das Umarmen der Kinder am Ende. Diese fehlende Fokalisierung lässt Griseldis zu einer duldbaren Heiligen werden.<sup>22</sup> „Jeder Zugriff seiner dunklen Launen bleibt Griseldis jedoch äußerlich. Unanfechtbar von allem, was geschieht, ist sie unangefochten auch von jeglichem Affekt, verliert sich nicht in Freude, nicht in Trauer, hofft nichts, fürchtet nichts. Unerschüttert in Glück und Unglück, triumphiert sie als die Unwandelbare.“<sup>23</sup>

Ihr Ehemann ist, anders als bei Boccaccio, nicht gehässig zu seiner Frau, um sie zusätzlich zu quälen. Allerdings stellt natürlich auch er sie auf die Probe. Anlass dafür ist ein ‚sonderbares Verlangen‘ des

<sup>20</sup> „Quicquid in homine boni est, non ab alio quam a Deo est. Illi ego et status et matrimonii mei sortes, sperans de sua solita pietate, commiserim; ipse michi inveniet quod quieti mee sit expediens ac saluti“. Siehe Boccaccio – Petrarca, *Griselda* 33, 6.

<sup>21</sup> „ut omnes ad salutem publicam demissam celo feminam predicarent“. Siehe Boccaccio – Petrarca, *Griselda* 41, 19.

<sup>22</sup> Die intertextuellen Verweise auf Hiob stellt Bessi R., „La Griselda del Petrarca“, in *La novella italiana. Atti di Convegno di Caprarola, 19–24 settembre 1988* (Rom: 1989) II, 711–726 heraus.

<sup>23</sup> Worstbrock, „Petrarcas ‚Griseldis‘“ 251.

Markgrafen, die Treue seiner Frau zu prüfen.<sup>24</sup> Valterius wird zum „Instrument der providentia Dei“<sup>25</sup> und soll in gewisser Weise Gott vertreten, was ihm nicht ohne innere Konflikte möglich ist.<sup>26</sup>

Petrarca gestaltet Valterius als positive Figur und nimmt seinen Handlungen das tyrannische Element, das für Gualtieris Handeln bestimmend war. Sowohl Valterius als auch Griseldis gewinnen im Vergleich zu Boccaccios entsprechenden Figuren an Individualität. Dies wird erreicht durch eine genauere Schilderung ihrer Reaktionen. Bei Valerius finden sich sogar Ansätze zur internen Fokalisierung. Auf diese Weise gewinnt die Erzählung an Realität und kann direkter auf den Leser wirken.

Realitätsnähe hat aber ihre Grenze. Sie ist mit den Stichworten interne Fokalisierung bzw. personale Erzählen umschrieben. Die Innenansicht der Gefühle und Gedanken einer Figur helfen dem Leser, sich mit ihr zu identifizieren, ihre Handlungsweise zu verstehen und—im Fall des Exempels—für gut zu befinden. Zu viel Innensicht bewirkt jedoch perspektivische Verwirrung, wovon zahlreiche *Decameron*-Novellen zeugen.<sup>27</sup>

Aus diesem Grund bleibt der Erzähler bei Petrarca fast durchgehend allwissend und gibt Gefühle seiner Protagonisten nur an Stellen weiter, wo sie für die Geschichte wichtig sind.

Diese Bearbeitung der *Griseldis* brachte Petrarca höchsten Ruhm ein. Sie und nicht Boccaccios *Decameron*-Fassung war der Ausgangspunkt für die breite *Griseldis*-Rezeption in Europa. Natürlich lag das nicht unwesentlich in der Tatsache begründet, dass lateinische Texte von einem anderen und zur damaligen Zeit größeren Personenkreis gelesen wurden. Aus diesem Sachverhalt ergibt sich die Merkwürdigkeit, dass Petrarca durch das rezipierende Bearbeiten Boccaccios kurz vor seinem Tod einen Bestseller erschuf. Zugleich

<sup>24</sup> „Cepit, ut fit, interim Valterium, [...] mirabilis quedam – quam laudabilis doctiores iudicent – cupiditas sat expertam care fidem coniugis experiendi altius et iterum atque iterum retentandi“. Siehe Boccaccio – Petrarca, *Griselda* 43, 21.

<sup>25</sup> Bertelsmeier-Kierst, *„Griseldis“ in Deutschland* 131.

<sup>26</sup> „Die Prüfungen, die er Griseldis erdulden läßt, bereiten ihm selbst, wenn sie vollzogen werden, heftigen Schmerz – erstaunlich genug aber, daß er sie überhaupt betreibt. In dieser Rolle, seiner wichtigsten, ist er merkwürdig gespalten, als Figur der Erzählung kaum mehr begreiflich.“ Worstbrock, „Petrarcas „Griseldis““ 252.

<sup>27</sup> Es entbehrt nicht einer gewissen Komik, dass diese letzte Novelle eben nicht in der üblichen Weise gestaltet ist.



ist der Text so erfolgreich, weil er das Bedürfnis nach Klarheit im Erzählen befriedigt. Die Bearbeitung entspringt nicht nur einem fest umrissenen Gelehrtenverständnis, sie bestätigt auch die Sichtweisen der potentiellen Rezipienten. Während Boccaccio aufgrund fehlender Kenntnis seiner volkssprachlichen Leserschaft das *aptum* nicht deutlich benennen kann, bedient Petrarca die seine optimal, weil er sie sehr genau kennt und weil seine Denkweise mit der ihren fast vollständig übereinstimmt.

Mehr noch, die restriktive Erzählweise, die Art und Weise, wie ein Erzähler den *discours* der Novelle bei Petrarca beherrscht, spiegelt sein Verständnis von Kommunikation und Interaktion wider. Der Vergleich zwischen Boccaccios und Petrarcas *Giseldis*-Versionen erlaubt Beobachtungen, die sich ähnlich auch in der Beziehung dieser beiden Gelehrten machen lässt. Petrarca gibt die Regeln und die Sicht auf die Welt vor. Er ordnet ein, erläutert, beschreibt und belehrt. Was bei ihm göttlich-vorbildhaft ist, präsentiert sich bei Boccaccio menschlich-volksnah. Wie der Leser von Petrarcas *Giseldis* von einem dominanten Erzähler instruiert wird, so holt sich Boccaccio regelmäßig bei seinem Lehrer und Freund Ratschläge und Hinweise. Er akzeptiert die von Petrarca zur Regel erhobene Hierarchie.

### *Eine ungleiche Freundschaft*

Selbstverständlich war Boccaccio ebenfalls bekannt, dass es ruhmreicher war, in Latein zu schreiben, und seine lateinischen Bücher belegen, dass auch ihm das Zielpublikum gelehrter Literatur durchaus vertraut war. Dennoch entschied er sich immer wieder für das Dichten in Volkssprache und für Versuche, das Italienische in eine dem Lateinischen gleichstehende Prosa umzuformen. Vermutlich hat das dazu geführt, dass er schon zu Lebzeiten und bis heute stets nicht nur als der jüngste, sondern auch als der lediglich drittgrößte unter den *tre corone* der italienischen Literatur geführt wird. Ein weiterer Grund für seine Nachordnung in der Hierarchie der Dichtergrößen dürfte—neben seiner Vorliebe für die Volkssprache—die Tatsache sein, dass er sich anders als Petrarca nicht als Poet inszenierte. Ihm war es wichtig, mit seinen Texten und seinen Schriften zu Literatur und Dichtern Verständnis für Dichtung zu schaffen. In diesen Zusammenhang gehören seine Dante-Vorlesungen, die Dante- und Petrarca-Biographien sowie die *Genealogie deorum gentilium*. Boccaccio

war Gelehrter, er war auch Dichter, aber stilisierte sich nicht als solcher. Stattdessen zeigen seine Briefe an Petrarca eine merkwürdige Form von Unterwürfigkeit und Verehrung, die sich selbst durch offensichtliche Arroganz des Freundes nicht beirren ließ.<sup>28</sup>

Dass Petrarca das *Decameron* erst 1373 zur Kenntnis nahm, wie er im oben behandelten *Griseldis*-Brief behauptet, ist angesichts der Begierigkeit, mit der Boccaccio jede Zeile Petrarcas aufzog, ein Affront. Es verwundert überhaupt, wie Boccaccio Spitzen dieses, von ihm so hoch gelobten „vir optimus“<sup>29</sup> geflissentlich übersah und stets zu dieser Freundschaft unter den vorgegebenen Bedingungen stand.

So redet er beispielsweise Petrarca in einem Brief aus dem Jahr 1367 als „preceptor inclite“ an und bedauert, ihn nicht in Venedig angetroffen zu haben. Sein Lob des Freundes ist in diesem Brief besonders deutlich, weshalb Petrarca dieses Schriftstück wohl als „l'una ex mille“ allen anderen Boccaccio-Briefen vorgezogen hat. Durch den Briefwechsel mit Petrarca, so Boccaccio, ist er sich sicher, „dass mein Name wenigstens deshalb für viele Jahrhunderte den nachfolgenden Generationen verehrungswürdig sein wird“.<sup>30</sup>

Petrarca schätzte Boccaccio zweifellos ebenfalls, aber dessen Volksnähe und damit auch die Sympathie für Dante konnte er nur schwer akzeptieren. Im 15. Brief des 21. Buchs der *Familiari* geht er als Replik auf ein Gespräch mit und einen Brief von Boccaccio über Dante auf den großen Dichter Dante und sein Verhältnis zu ihm ein, ohne den Namen Dantes ein einziges Mal zu erwähnen.<sup>31</sup> Die durchaus größtenteils lobenden Ausführungen zu Dante stufen Boccaccio als dessen Verehrer herab. Denn wenn Petrarca Dantes Bemühungen um die Volkssprache lobt und sich selbst als jemanden beschreibt, der als junger Mann dem Ideal Dante nacheiferte,

<sup>28</sup> Es verwundert, dass die Freundschaft zwischen Petrarca und Boccaccio zwar Allgemeingut der Forschung, aber offensichtlich kein Thema, dessen Beleuchtung sich lohnt, darstellt. Zwar erscheinen beide Namen in mehreren Titeln von Untersuchungen, aber keine davon hat das Verhältnis der beiden Autoren zum Gegenstand. Es geht in derartigen Abhandlungen bestenfalls um Quellen, die beide benutzt haben.

<sup>29</sup> „Queso Franciscum nostrum salutes, et vale, virorum optime“. Siehe Giovanni Boccaccio, *Epistole e lettere*, ed. G. Auzzas (Mailand: 1992) Brief XV, 640.

<sup>30</sup> „certus quia saltem in hoc apud posteros per multa secula erit venerabile nomen meum“. Siehe Boccaccio, *Epistole e lettere* XV, 640. Petrarca hat den Brief mit dem erwähnten Zusatz „l'una ex mille“ versehen. Vgl. den Kommentar zum Brief.

<sup>31</sup> Petrarca Francesco, *Le Familiari*, ed. V. Rossi – U. Bosco (Florenz: 1942) IV, 94–100.

offenbart er damit gleichzeitig seine Sicht auf Boccaccio. Dieser ist unreif, wie Petrarca vor langer Zeit, aber mit dem Unterschied, dass diese Phase bei Petrarca sehr viel kürzer währte: „Wie kann der Vorwurf überhaupt wahr sein, dass ich eine Person beneide, die ihr ganzes Leben Studien widmete, denen ich nur die ersten Blüten meiner Jugend gewidmet habe?“<sup>32</sup> Wie Dante zu dichten ist Anbiederung an das Volk und der falsche Weg. Das Dichten in Latein steht weit über diesem Dichten im *Volgare*, wie es Dante und Boccaccio vertreten.

Im Gegensatz zu Dante war Boccaccio allerdings zugleich Gelehrter und von daher noch nicht verloren. So kämpft Petrarca in diesem Brief zugleich um das Seelenheil des Gelehrten Boccaccio und um eine Lehrer-Schüler-Beziehung, die er mit Erinnerung an ihre erste Begegnung am Leben zu halten versucht:

Eins kann ich niemals vergessen: wie Du, als ich mitten im Winter durch Italien eilte, mir auf halbem Weg nicht nur mit Zeichen der Leidenschaft, die wie Fußstapfen des Geistes sind, sondern persönlich entgegengeeilt kamst, um mich zu treffen, nachdem Du Dein bewunderungswürdiges Gedicht vorausgeschickt hattest, angetrieben von dem großen Verlangen, einen Mann zu sehen, dem Du noch nicht begegnet warst. Und so hast Du mir, den Du zu lieben beschlossen hast, zuerst Deine geistige Statur und erst dann Deine physische bekannt gemacht. [. . .] Du hast für mich die poetische Begegnung zwischen König Arcadius und Anchises erneuert, als er sagte: „Der Geist brannte von jugendlichem Eifer, den Mann zu treffen und seine Hand zu schütteln.“ Auch wenn ich nicht wie er über anderen stand, sondern eher unterhalb von ihnen, so war Dein Geist doch nicht weniger entflammt.<sup>33</sup>

Boccaccio eilte Petrarca zeitlebens entgegen und versuchte, ihn nach Florenz zu locken, um ihn ständig um sich zu haben, aber Petrarca

<sup>32</sup> „Quam tandem veri faciem habet ut invideam illi qui in his etatem totam posuit, in quibus ego vix adolescentie florem primitiasque posuerim?“. Siehe Petrarca, *Le Familiari* IV, 98.

<sup>33</sup> „unum illud oblivisci nunquam possum, quod tu olim me Italie medio iter festinantius agentem, iam sevientem bruma, non affectibus solis, qui quasi quidam animi passus sunt, sed corporeo etiam motu celer, miro nondum visi hominis desiderio prevenisti, premissio haus ignobili carmine, atque ita prius ingenii et mox corporis tui vultum michi quem amare decreveras, ostendisti. [. . .] renovasti illum poeticum cum Anchise congressum regis Archadii, cui ‚mens juvenili ardebat amore Compellare virum et dextre coniungere dextram‘. Quamvis enim ego non ut ille cunctis altior irem sed humilior, tibi tamen non minus ardens animus fuit.“ Petrarca, *Le Familiari* IV, 100, 27–29. Übersetzung nach Neumann F., *Francesco Petrarca* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: 1998) 101f.

wollte bekanntlich nicht. Die Freundschaft auf Distanz lebte von brieflichem Austausch, gegenseitigem Lesen von lateinischen Texten und kleinen Freundschaftsdiensten, wie das Besorgen von Büchern (z. B. Homer in lateinischen Versen seitens Boccaccios). Dabei nahm Petrarca immer die Rolle des überlegenen Ratgebers ein, nicht immer sehr einfühlsam, wie sich zeigen lässt.

Als beispielsweise Boccaccio 1362 beschlossen hatte, sein *Decameron* zu verbrennen und sich von der Dichtkunst abzuwenden, da ihm der sterbende Kartäuser Pietro Patroni prophezeite, er würde ein schlimmes Ende finden, wenn er seine Schriften nicht widerrufe, begegnet ihm Petrarca mit interessegeleitetem Humor und erklärt gegen Ende seines Briefes geradezu perfid:

Wenn du aber auf deinem Vorsatze beharrst und wenn du all jene Studien, die wir längst hinter uns gelassen haben, und auch alle Wissenschaften in ihrem gesamten Umfange von dir werfen, wenn du sogar deine Bücher verkaufen und damit also das Werkzeug der Wissenschaft selbst wegwerfen willst [und] wenn dies wirklich dein unwiderruflicher Entschluß ist, dann ist es mir—bei Gott—lieb, dass ich, der unersättlich Büchergierige, wie du mich nennst [. . .], durch dein Urteil vor allen anderen ein Vorzugsrecht bei diesem Kaufe erhalte. [. . .] Ich möchte auf keinen Fall, daß die Bücher eines Mannes von deiner Bedeutung hierhin und dorthin verstreut und, wie es so geht, von profanen Händen betastet werden.<sup>34</sup>

Eine seltsame Freundschaft mag man angesichts dieses Befundes denken. Zwar scheinen die beiden Personen, die diese Freundschaft eingegangen sind, tatsächlich eine Art geistigen Austausch zu betreiben und einander auch in Maßen zu helfen. Gleichzeitig funktioniert diese Freundschaft als inszenierte, nach unausgesprochenen Regeln der einen Seite.<sup>35</sup> Petrarca gibt vor, was in dieser freundschaftlichen

<sup>34</sup> „Qui si cepto heres, ut studia hec, que pridem post tergum liquimus, literasque omnes – quantum innuis – ac, distractis libris, ipsa etiam velis literarum instrumenta proicere atque ita unidque persuasum tibi est, gratum, hercle, habeo me librorum avidum, ut tu ais [. . .], in hac emptione omnibus tuo iudicio prelatum. [. . .] nolim tamen tanti viri libros huc illuc effundi aut prophanis, ut fit, manibus contrectari“. Siehe Francesco Petrarca, *Le Senili*, testo a cura di E. Nota, introduzione e traduzione e note di U. Dotti. vol. 1. (Rom: 1993) Brief I, 5, 63f. Übersetzung nach Petrarca Francesco, *Dichtungen, Briefe, Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: 1956) 139f.

<sup>35</sup> Interessant wäre an dieser Stelle zu untersuchen, ob Petrarca damit einem bestimmten *amicitia*-Ideal folgt. Anzunehmen ist ein Bezug auf Cicero, bekannt für Freundschaft als Erziehungsprojekt ist allerdings eher Seneca.

Beziehung verhandelt wird und was nicht. Diese Freundschaft war ungleich von Anfang an. Es war unmöglich für Boccaccio, mit diesem Mann jemals auf eine gleiche Ebene zu gelangen; ein Zustand, der Petrarca recht war und den er aufrechterhielt.

Es ist bereits zu Lebzeiten der beiden klar, dass sie in hierarchischer Abstufung die Plätze zwei und drei der Rangliste bedeutender Autoren italienischer Muttersprache einnehmen. In *Seniles* V, 2 stellt Petrarca fest, dass Dantes Größe im Bereich volkssprachlicher Dichtung anzuerkennen sei. Ihm selbst sei von einem alten Mann aus Ravenna der zweite Platz zuerkannt worden. Boccaccio solle diese Tatsache anerkennen. Er würde seinen Rang durchaus an ihn abtreten, wenn er das wünsche und glaube, Petrarca sei das Hindernis auf dem Weg zum ersten Platz, gibt jedoch zu bedenken, dass dergleichen Abstufungen nicht so glorreich sind, wie sie scheinen mögen. Teilweise nutze ein zweiter oder dritter Platz mehr. Wer den zweiten Platz akzeptiert, hat, so Petrarcas Meinung, den ersten verdient, wer den zweiten ablehnt, verdient letztlich den ersten nicht. Womit klar gestellt wäre, dass Boccaccio mit der Zuschreibung des dritten Platzes zufrieden sein sollte, wie Petrarca es mit dem zweiten ist.<sup>36</sup> Selbstverständlich basiert diese Gelassenheit des älteren Freundes auf der Gewissheit, dass ihm Rang eins in ganz Europa für die lateinische Literatur zugeschrieben wird. Da er die Volkssprache sowieso verachtet, berührt ihn die Nachordnung nach Dante vermutlich nicht besonders, Boccaccio aber sehr wohl. Doch auch diese Ausführungen nahm dieser offensichtlich widerspruchslos hin.

Fast alle Briefe Boccaccios an Petrarca, die erhalten geblieben sind, zeigen einen untergeordneten, beflissenen Schüler. Boccaccio ist kein Brutus, Atticus oder Socrates für Petrarca. Er ist ein Lehrling, mit dem man freundschaftliche Verbundenheit pflegt.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> „Audio senem illum Ravennatem, rerum talium non ineptum iudicem, quotiens de his sermo est semper tibi locum tertium assignare solitum. [...] Nimirum enim primum cito locum mereri poterit qui secundum pati potest; qui non potest autem, ipsum quoque quem respuat incipiet non mereri“. Siehe Francesco Petrarca, *Senile V* 2, ed. M. Berté (Florenz: 1998) 77, 32ff.

<sup>37</sup> Der Unterschied zu der Freundschaftsbeziehung mit Ludovicus Sanctus ist in diesem Punkt erheblich, vgl. den Beitrag von Jan Papy in diesem Band.

*optimus venerandusque praeceptor – Die Heilung des trägen Schülers*

Es kann festgehalten werden, dass zwischen Boccaccio und Petrarca eine ungleiche Freundschaft herrschte, die über feste Rollenzuschreibungen und damit verbundene Kommunikationsvorgaben funktionierte. Beide, auch Boccaccio, nahmen ihre Rollen in dem Spiel an.

Die Tatsache, dass Boccaccio diese Machtverteilung hingenommen hat, heißt aber nicht, dass er sie nicht reflektiert hat. Darauf deutet eine Textstelle in Boccaccios *De casibus virorum illustrium* hin, die eine differenziertere Sicht auf das Verhältnis der beiden zueinander nahe legt – sofern man Boccaccios mehrdeutiges Schreiben, wie zu Beginn des Beitrags ausgeführt, als fraglos hinnimmt.

Am Anfang des achten Buchs hat Boccaccio eine Passage eingefügt, die als Zurechtweisung des Autors durch den hochberühmten Franciscus Petrarca bekannt ist. Der Autor berichtet, wie er bei der Arbeit müde wurde, sich hinlegte und einschlief. Zwar bereitete ihm die nicht zu Ende gebrachte Arbeit Sorge, doch er beruhigte sich mit der Freiwilligkeit seines Tuns und der Sinnlosigkeit des Unterfangens, durch sein Werk berühmt zu werden. Da erscheint ihm Petrarca, sein „optimus venerandusque praeceptor“.<sup>38</sup>

Dieser fährt den Ertappten an: „Warum, verehrter Professor der Faulheit, bleibst du liegen? Warum erschlaffst du aufgrund falscher Überredung der Trägheit?“.<sup>39</sup> Der Angesprochene schweigt beschämt, errötet und blickt zu Boden. Allerdings ist er auch gespannt, worauf genau die folgende, zu erwartende Strafpredigt hinauslaufen würde.

Diese nimmt beinahe vollständig das Kapitel ein und besticht durch rhetorisches Können. Boccaccio imitiert an dieser Stelle die Schreibweise seines Lehrers. Diesem ist, wie er sagt, völlig unverständlich, wie sich sein Schüler, dem er doch beigebracht habe, wie er zu arbeiten habe, der Faulheit hingeben kann. „Tatsächlich habe ich dich mit meinen Worten zu nichts anderem überreden wollen, als lobenswert zu üben“.<sup>40</sup> Ziel der Arbeit sei der Ruhm, der den Ehrenmann in das

<sup>38</sup> Giovanni Boccaccio, *De casibus virorum illustrium*, ed. P.G. Ricci und V. Zaccaria (Mailand: 1983) 652, 6.

<sup>39</sup> „Quid iaces, ociorum professor egregie? Quid falsa inertie suasionem torpescis?“. Siehe Boccaccio, *De casibus* 652, 7.

<sup>40</sup> „Non equidem nil magis suasi verbis quam laudabiliter exerceri“. Siehe Boccaccio, *De casibus* 652, 8.

höchste Licht bis zum Ende der Welt erhebe und ihm so Glückseligkeit schenke.<sup>41</sup> Beispiele dafür hat Petrarca zahlreiche – von dem Assyrikerkönig Ninus bis Hieronymus und Augustinus.

Dabei sei es kein Argument gegen die Anstrengung, wenn die eigene Arbeit mitunter anderen und nicht dem Urheber selbst zum Ruhm ver helfe. „Sag mir, ich bitte dich, was der Nächstenliebe mehr entgegensteht als das Glück eines anderen zu beneiden? Warum versuchst du, durch deine Faulheit das deinem Nächsten zu entziehen, was Gott ihm durch deine Mühe vielleicht geben wollte? Ist es eventuell nicht besser, für einen anderen gearbeitet zu haben, als sich allein unglücklich in Tatenlosigkeit zu verzehren?“<sup>42</sup> Schließlich hat Boccaccio einen Ruf zu verlieren, zumindest eventuell, denn er ist bzw. könnte vielen Leuten bekannt sein.<sup>43</sup> Ein lächerliches Argument zwar, aber zu beachten nach Ansicht des ‚praeceptor‘.

Die Rede endet mit einem Appell: Boccaccio solle sich schämen, erheben und weiterarbeiten: „Steh also auf und verzweifle nicht an meiner Großmut und vermeide weiterhin dich von dummen Rat schlägen in solch eine bedauernswerte Faulheit lenken zu lassen“.<sup>44</sup> Dieser traut sich wieder, nach oben zu blicken, um die Milde des Lehrers, der über ihm steht, zu schauen.<sup>45</sup> Doch der ist bereits verschwunden. Der Autor nimmt in neuem Pflichtbewusstsein die Feder wieder in die Hand und verdammt die vorherige, falsche Sicht auf die Herausforderung, tätig zu sein.

Diese kleine Episode spiegelt exakt die Konstellation dieser Freundschaft und die Haltung Petrarcas wider. Der arbeitende Boccaccio, der einschl äft, wird von dem Lehrer geweckt und getadelt. Petrarca selbst ist über jeden Zweifel an seinem Fleiß erhaben. Da Fleiß und aus der Arbeit resultierender Ruhm den Menschen in die

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<sup>41</sup> „Hec morientium corporum animas, quasi per stratum iter, summa cum claritate deducit in celos, in terris relictis nominibus perpetuo splendore conspicuis“. Siehe Boccaccio, *De casibus* 654, 10.

<sup>42</sup> „Quid queso caritati magis contrarium est quam felicitati alterius invidere? Quid ocio tuo conaris subtrahere quod forsitan Deus alteri labore tuo attribuire velit? Nonne satius est alteri laborasse quam sibi ipsi misere tabuisse?“. Siehe Boccaccio, *De casibus* 658, 19.

<sup>43</sup> „Addebas ridiculum, desidia involutus tua, nomen scilicet tuum esse aut futurum esse (quod possibile est) commune multis“. Siehe Boccaccio, *De casibus* 658, 19.

<sup>44</sup> „surge ergo nec de humanitate mea desperes caveasque de cetero ne in segnitiam tam damnandam stultis suasionibus trahi te sinas“. Siehe Boccaccio, *De casibus* 662, 29.

<sup>45</sup> „inspecturus praeceptoris mei clementiam in celum faciem extuli“. Siehe Boccaccio, *De casibus* 662, 30.

Nähe Gottes rückt, ist Petrarca selbst an dieser Stelle gottgleich. Er kommt und verschwindet wie eine göttliche Erscheinung. Er steht in der Kette seiner Autoritätsbeweise nach Augustinus und Hieronymus selbst an letzter Stelle. Er ist derjenige, der Boccaccio angeleitet hat und dem er zu verdanken hat, dass er weiß, was arbeiten bedeutet. Infolgedessen ist es auch Petrarca, der ihm befehlen kann aufzustehen und weiterzugehen—ähnlich dem Messias des Neuen Testaments. Selbst die Zurücksetzung des Volksschriftstellers Boccaccio wird ironisch vorgetragen, indem auf seinen bestehenden bzw. dann durch ‚correctio‘ relativierten Bekanntheitsgrad verwiesen wird.

Man kann und sollte nicht so weit gehen—auch wegen der Entstehungsdaten von *De casibus* und der *Griselda*—anzunehmen, das Lob des Arbeitens für den Ruhm des anderen sei auf das Verhältnis der beiden Dichter bezogen. Aber vom Ende der Freundschaft her gesehen, wenn Petrarca von der Vorarbeit des Freundes durch dessen *Griseldis*-Novelle profitiert, kommentiert die Stelle nachträglich in ironischer Weise die Verhältnisse.

Der Anlass der Strafpredigt ist ein nichtiger. Boccaccio hat sich schlicht und einfach kurz hingelegt. Die Art, wie die Predigt Petrarcas konstruiert ist, welchen Raum sie einnimmt und wie der Sprecher als Erscheinung auftritt, zeigt deutlich: Das ist nur eine scheinbare Hommage an einen verehrten Lehrer;<sup>46</sup> tatsächlich ist es eine wunderbare Karikatur Petrarcas und damit letztlich ein besonders liebevolles Geschenk an einen Freund.

Bis heute hat Boccaccio den dritten Platz in der Rangfolge der bedeutenden Dichter Italiens inne, was bedeutet, dass seine Person und Werke am wenigsten übersetzt, erforscht und untersucht werden. Er gilt im Allgemeinen als weniger bedeutend als Dante, was die volkssprachliche Literatur angeht, und als weniger ruhmvoll als Petrarca hinsichtlich der lateinischen Werke. Das *Decameron* genießt einen zweifelhaften Ruf als Sammlung erotischer Geschichten, die vermutlich für alle Zeiten der Zensur zum Opfer gefallen wären, würde man in ihnen nicht den Beginn der europäischen Novellistik vermuten.

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<sup>46</sup> Vgl. den Kommentar der Ausgabe, der ein komplett anderes Verständnis des Textes signalisiert: „Lunga parentesi riflessiva nel discorso narrativo: sostenuta, nobilmente ispirata, nel culto devoto del maestro; ma prolissa e priva di quel nerbo che altrove il Boccaccio sa dimostrare anche in queste digressioni“. Siehe Boccaccio, *De casibus* 1015. Dass Boccaccio sein Verhältnis zu Petrarca ironisieren könnte, kommt bezeichnenderweise keinem einzigen Forscher in den Sinn.



Man kann sich sicher sein: Boccaccio würde alle zurücksetzenden Urteile in Bezug auf seine Person und sein Werk verständnisvoll akzeptieren, wie er auch jede Einschätzung Petrarcas klaglos hingenommen hat. Eines bleibt aber festzuhalten: Seine *Griseldis* war zuerst da.

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PETRARCH IN BOHEMIA: CULTURE AND CIVIL LIFE IN  
THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN PETRARCH AND  
JOHANN VON NEUMARKT\*

Ugo Dotti

At the end of the tenth book of the *Rerum familiarium libri* (together with the *Seniles* the ideal autobiography of the poet) we read a short letter in which Petrarch, in moderation yet with satisfaction, announces to his readers and us, his posterity, that his name has passed the Alps and is now famous, under the German sky, among the most learned German people. The letter in question is *Familiares* X, 6, without an exact date but to be dated in 1353, probably soon after the poet's definitive return to Italy or in the second half of that year. The letter is a response to an extremely kind, if not direct and enthusiastic letter from the Imperial Chancellor and bishop of Naumburg, Johann von Neumarkt (Jan ze Středa),<sup>1</sup> which starts with the words *Utinam Parnasei*. In the letter, the writer asked Petrarch to send him some of his poetry. One thing may be certain: in the middle of the Trecento the poet singing the praises of Laura was not only known in Italy and France, but also under the German sky and in 'barbaric' lands. In Prague, where Emperor Charles IV resided, a 'Prague circle' of admirers had just been formed, as in Italy where intellectuals

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\* Translated from the Italian by Jan Papy.

<sup>1</sup> On Johann von Neumarkt, see Klapper J., *Johann von Neumarkt, Bischof und Hofkanzler. Religiöse Renaissance in Böhmen zur Karls IV* (Leipzig: 1964). For a historical-political background concerning Petrarch, Emperor Charles IV and the 'Prague circles', see Dotti, U., *Vita di Petrarca*, 3th ed. (Bari: 2004) 301–315 and 341, and Dotti U., "Umanesimo e vita civile. Lo scambio epistolare tra Petrarca e il cancelliere imperiale Jan ze Středa", in *Petrarca e la scoperta della coscienza moderna* (Milan: 1978) 165–174. The dates of the letters exchanged between Petrarch and Johann von Neumarkt have been discussed by Piur P., "Petrarcas Briefwechsel mit deutschen Zeitgenossen", in Burdach K., *Vom Mittelalter zur Reformation* (Berlin: 1933); by Wilkins E.H., *Petrarch's Eight Years in Milan*, The Mediaeval Academy of America (Cambridge, MA: 1958) (cf. his *Index of Works of Petrarch and Index of Persons*), and by id., *Petrarch's Later Years*, The Mediaeval Academy of America (Cambridge, MA: 1959) 51–52. A more recent discussion is to be found in *Pétrarque, Lettres familières. Tome IV: Livres XII–XV/Rerum familiarium libri XII–XV*, Traduction A. Longpré, notices et notes de U. Dotti, Les Classiques de l'Humanisme (Paris: 2005).

and literators had gathered in Florence and Naples. The worldly and literary fame of the poet, his *nomen*, had certainly passed the borders and, what is even more important, it had found a place in the neighbourhood of the city in which the Emperor resided. Charles of Bohemia, who would soon be elected in Italy to be crowned with the imperial crown (1355), had known the poet personally in Mantua where both had been engaged in important conversations. In receiving Petrarch with full honors in Prague in 1356, the Emperor was renovating—at least in Petrarch's eyes—the ancient deeds of the Roman Emperor Augustus and the latter's relationship with Vergil and Horace. In short, this was Petrarch's consecration as the first European intellectual. And the poet knew it. Among so many erudite allusions, among which this familiar response is woven, there is one which fully reveals such pride and consciousness. My name, so Petrarch tells him (*Familiars* X, 6, 1), is on the lips of most learned men. Most obviously this echoes Ennius's funeral inscription, which Petrarch could have read either in Vergil (*Georgics* III, 9) either, and most probably so, in Cicero (*Tusculan Disputations* I, 15, 34):

Nemo me lacrimis . . .

Cur? volito vivos per ora virum.

*Volito vivos per ora virum*: this is the celebration itself of fame—of poetry's glory—that conquers time and space, and that is reputed to be an essential component of a new cultural civilization—humanism—which, as such, is identified with Petrarch in a primordial center of European political life. And it is also, ideally, the celebration of culture as an irrevocable way of a new civil life. The remarkable continuation of the exchange of letters between Petrarch and the high circle of prelates or officers at the imperial court, not to forget of course those with the Emperor and Empress Anna, will fully confirm this first impression.

In order to grasp, however, this strong, ideal message which Petrarch, as we will see, intended to transfer from a private self-celebration to his exchange with the Imperial Chancellor Johann—this very special correspondent from the Bohemian humanist circle—it is necessary, and I would rather say inevitable, to follow this exchange in the precise context in which it was placed in the collection of *Familiars*. For it is important to notice that this correspondence was placed in the first part of the poet's grandiose collection in which Petrarch, among others, confronts Charles IV in no less than eight

letters with the question of imperial power (whereas in the *Seniles* the main political problem will be that of the Church, its exile from Avignon, and, most of all, its return to Rome). The figure of the Emperor and his Chancellor are in fact, even if this would not be obvious at first sight, closely linked: the first becomes the true successor of Emperor Augustus aiming at a restoration of order and peace; and the second is depicted as the organizer of a cultural revival, that essential component of the Emperor's objective of peace and order. Of the first, Petrarch will thus be the persistent instigator and inciter; of the latter, the cordial esteeming beholder. The poet's rather long stay in Prague in 1356 is of particular importance to this second ambition.

Is it a pure coincidence that the very first letter directed by Petrarch to Johann von Neumarkt (answering, as has been stated, to the Imperial Chancellor's *Utinam Parmasei*) is to be read at the end of the tenth book of the *Familiars*? I would say no, for this tenth book is an important and particular one in the collection for at least two reasons. First, only six letters have been included in this book, letters which have been ordered in a meticulous structure so as to show Petrarch's double face—on the one hand, Petrarch the humanist and public man, and, on the other, Petrarch the penitent Christian (the first, in my belief, outshining the second, if the disposition of the texts is taken into consideration). Second, this book contains the first shimmering exhortation to Charles IV to come to Italy, this being the letter which opens the tenth book and in this way opens a theme which is dear to Petrarch: the intellectual's two-fold cultural and political mission. Further, with the four most intimate letters placed in the middle, the book opens and closes—viz. with the letter to Charles IV and the letter to his Chancellor—with a look on the welfare of Italy and the world, as well as on the authoritative recognition (by the Prague court) that this issue was one to be dealt with by a writer and scholar. In any case, one thing remains—as if it were an anticipation of what is to come to the surface in a most clear way in the 21st and, above all, in the 23rd book (which, in fact, is the last book of the *Familiars*, if one, following the 'most illustrious ancients', considers the 24th as a sort of *hors d'oeuvre*)—that where the political objective appears, by introducing the Emperor's name, there the cultural objective also emerges by introducing the name of his Chancellor. Or, the spread of a knowledge and a culture by submerging its own roots in the ancient Roman world and

its Augustan customs, resolves with ever deeper conviction to be the unique way towards a renewal of the world. Since, as has just been pointed out, we must wait for April 1357 and the 21st book of the *Familiares* to encounter two letters to the Chancellor Johann von Neumarkt—cf. *Familiares* XXI, 2 and 5—this does not necessarily mean that the dialogue with the Prague humanists was interrupted. From May 1354 to March of the following year, as if to point out these continuous links between Petrarch and Prague, two of Johann's letters to Petrarch—the *Aureis redimita* (1354) and the *Saphirei fundamenti* (1355)—have been preserved. And indeed, these are but few pages in which, as in an obsession, Petrarch's Latin and his extraordinary 'style' are praised—an admiration which the Imperial Chancellor (but not only he) took up while reading the letters which Petrarch continued to send to the Emperor (these actually are *Familiares* XVIII, 1 and XIX, 4). Yet, this apparent laudatory ingenuity displayed by the Prague circles (and by the Emperor himself) is not without significance if one thinks about the constant and well-known polemic which Petrarch carried on against the use of medieval Latin, a sort of Latin which was so cherished in the circles of the Curia. In other words, it was in Bohemia and, so to speak, in a 'barbaric' land—even still at the imperial court in which our poet could but see the spirits of Augustus, Horace and Vergil—that it seemed to Petrarch as if he had discovered grounds most fertile to extend, and this to a European level, renewal which was not only cultural but also linguistic and which he had promoted energetically for years already.

Between the end of 1354 and late summer 1356, two important events occurred which clearly reveal the cultural-political significance of the relationship between Petrarch and Johann von Neumarkt, that privileged exponent, as has been said, of the circle of prominent Bohemian dignitaries. Not being able to enter into particular, and, yes, perhaps even necessary elements here, it will suffice to mention the events as such: the entrance of the Emperor in Italy in order to connect the Imperial crown to Rome (April 1355) and, between May and August 1356, the long sojourn of the poet himself in Prague, invited there by the Visconti *pro ligustica pace*. The first event permitted the personal acquaintance of Petrarch either with Carlo or Giovanni Visconti (in Mantua in December 1354); the second allowed him to enter into relations with high and authoritative Prague circles (or to enlarge his direct acquaintances there: the Prague Archbishop

Ernest of Pardubic, the bishop of Olomouc, Giovanni Ocko, and Empress Anna). The 21st book of the *Familiare*s, which, certainly with some distance in time, gives a clear and forceful account of this very considerable increase of Petrarch's presence in Bohemian territory, is structured in such a way so as to shed light on the mission of the Italian intellectual as a mission grounding good universal government. In other words: the Augustan imperial model—a model based on peace, good customs and social welfare—is presented as the main road to be followed by those whose task it is to achieve a similar government. This, in my opinion, is the great 'public' theme which Petrarch wanted to tackle at the end of his great epistolary collection and which, in fact, will appear to echo, not without reason, in the last and 23rd book. For it is no coincidence that Petrarch, probably on 25 March 1355, sent a rather supporting letter to Johann von Neumarkt (from Milan and after having gotten to know him personally)—the *Misc.*, 12 probably in response to the *Saphirei fundamenti*—which he concluded with a eulogy, and not a superficial one, of the addressee.<sup>2</sup> In this eulogy Petrarch stressed the following items: that Johann, although he had been educated in regions which care more for other studies, 'by breaking through the heavy fogs of vulgar errors' and by directing himself 'towards the open summit of truth' had renewed the flame of the true Latin language by his ardent eloquence. Only for this—given the idea that speaking well could not but have a positive influence on living and acting well—he deserved to be praised by 'all illustrious men from Italy and Greece'.

It is thus Latin-Roman classicism which now occupies the first place in the epistolary exchange in question. It is also in this very correspondence that there is a sustained, if not exaggerated, polemical vein in those letters confronting the milieu of the papal Curia in Avignon, frequented for such a long time by Petrarch and finally abandoned in the late spring 1353. Let us read the first letter of this 21st book addressed—in the Prague and Bohemian context—to the Archbishop Ernest of Pardubic and dated 29 April 1357 (the 30th of April in  $\beta$ ). After two paragraphs dedicated to the theme of the *odiosa veritas* (which returns in the preface of Petrarch's *Sine nomine*)

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<sup>2</sup> This letter has recently been edited in *Francesco Petrarca, Lettere disperse: Varie e Miscellaneæ*, ed. A. Pantheri (Parma: 1994) 230–244.



Petrarch mentions, and this explicitly, his sojourn to the Imperial court in the following way:

I remember well with which face, which mind, which words, which courtesy you could attract to yourself that stranger whom you only knew by name, last year [1356] when I was part of the embassy to our Emperor. I call to mind with which affability you often repeated to me: 'I feel sorry for you, friend, for having come to the barbarians.' I, on the contrary, confess that I saw nothing less barbarian, nothing more human than Caesar and some of his highly placed officials whom I will not name here; people of high rank and worthy to be mentioned in the best way and, as far as I can say, courteous and affable as if they were born in Attic Athens.

As we have stated, this theme, which reconnects itself once more to the one of the *recte loqui* where the word is the infallible sign of the interior *virtus*, is connected with the one of the *odiosa veritas*. Writing to the Archbishop one year after they have met, Petrarch confessed to his correspondent to have contrived and put aside writing a lot of things which he later renounced to unbosom to him—probably some thoughts developed in the *Sine nomine* which he had directed to the Curia—for the following reasons:

Ever saint and dear is truth, yet not always secure. She had enemies in all periods, but she never had such ones as in our time and the reason is that virtue has never had so few friends as today. Nobody hates truth unless he is bad, and it is precise this fear which can paralyze a strong man so as not to lie but to keep silent.

So, in the light of this new position it can perhaps not be assumed with certainty that all this is not only a long-distance polemic against Avignon, but perhaps also, for so many reasons impossible to be enumerated here, the conviction that the *renovatio mundi*, at least in its worldly and political sense, could only be derived from the laic world governed by the 'new Augustus'. It is true that Petrarch, while addressing this short and penetrating letter (*Familiars XXI*, 1) to Ernest of Pardubic, knew to address a man who was reputed for his activities as a reformer (as is attested in the *Statuta Ernesti*) but also understood that it was not in the Provence but in 'barbaric' Bohemia that he could count on a favorable territory for his mission as an innovating intellectual, and that he could rely, at least with respect to a cultural renovation, on a well-disposed and even enthusiastic audience.

And, indeed, enthusiastic is the right word here. After Petrarch returned from Prague to Milan, (probably) in the first months of 1357, the Imperial Chancellor wrote a new letter to Petrarch, viz. the letter *De fecundo pectore*. To this letter, next to the charter of the Count Palatine by which Charles IV had invested him (the letter *Etsi ab imperatore*), he added a golden stylet which Petrarch would first refuse but which he later, due to the donator's insistence, would accept. Here, once again, we are not only confronted with most warm eulogies by the Petrarchan Latin writer, it is in fact this most delicate promise—the ‘*dulcis Francisci memoria nunquam separabitur a Johanne*’—at the very end that is not only a gesture of kindness but also an element which permits him to confer upon himself with certainty the poet's response in *Familiares* XXI, 2 and written in Milan on 29 April 1357 (on the 30th of April in  $\beta$ )—even if this has been interpreted in another way by Wilkins.<sup>3</sup> This response, indeed, is very familiar and remarkable in particular verses. The whole first part of the letter is in fact dedicated to expressions of gratitude. These cover, as a sort of catalogue or set phrases, no less than five paragraphs. Moreover, these are formulas which are reminiscent of those already used before by Petrarch for one of his most intimate friends, Giacomo Colonna. Further, they echo a Stoic morality (the self-consciousness of one's own modesty confronted with the generous praise of one's friend). Finally, the whole is expressed in the *genus medium* much similar to certain models offered by Horace: ‘*Iocor tecum, meum decus, nec sum dubius totum hoc tui amoris esse, non meriti mei*’, and so on. It is important to be reminded once again that these schemes and tropes, disposed and used in various ways, reappear in all letters written to Charles's Chancellor and that they seem to underline that atmosphere already mentioned of ‘classicism’ and ideal *Romanitas* which inspired Petrarch while keeping alive his friendship with this transalpine humanist.

After some months, at the end of 1357 or at least early 1358, Petrarch received an answer, delivered by the messenger Sagremor de Pommiers. This new letter by Johann—the *Persuasiva dulcedo*—which, because of its allusion to the *grata iocunditas* of *Familiares* XXI,

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<sup>3</sup> See Wilkins E.H., *Petrarch's Correspondence* (Padova: 1960) 82.

2, can be identified as the real answer to the familiar letter quoted earlier, ended with an allusion to the messenger Sagremor de Pommiers. He was charged with the duty to recite the writer's 'cetera mentis desideria' to Petrarch—one should recall Johan's desire that this time the poet would accept the golden stylet which he had already sent before. And, indeed, Petrarch would this time Petrarch accept: in the responding familiar letter (*Familiaries* XXI, 5; dated Milan 25 March 1358) the poet actually proclaims being 'tua contentus aurea voluntate'.

This, however, is a letter intended for the most part to recommend to the Imperial Chancellor the messenger himself of the Visconti in such a way that the latter, after such an exhausting journey between Milan and Prague, should finally have an occasion, as one can grasp from one of the last letters written by Petrarch to Charles (*Familiaries* XXIII, 3), to spend his retirement nearby the Imperial Court (yet, Sagremor, would finally opt for a life in convent). Whereas Petrarch did not recommend a lot of his friends to the powerful and whereas in very different circumstances and to the same Charles, for instance, he recommended his most beloved Lelius (*Familiaries* XIX, 4) or other unknown acquaintances (*Familiaries* XXIII, 7), his recommendation of Sagremor seemed to be a particular obligation. Not only did he recommend Sagremor to Johann with his subtle humanist skill celebrating both the person and the one who should support the recommendation (the very same Chancellor)—thereby recurring to ancient Roman examples and to formulas and phrasings from the great Sallust—, he also directed letters of similar import either to the Archbishop of Prague (*Familiaries* XXI, 6), signing with a quotation from Cicero's *Pro Ligario*, or to the same Emperor (*Familiaries* XXI, 7) reminding him that the task of a Caesar was to abound 'in primis illustrium virorum'—a custom typical of the mythical Augustus. In sum and brief, with these letters of the 21st book of the *Familiaries* and after his long stay in Prague in 1356, two elements come to the surface: a Petrarchan teaching in high courtly circles is almost unquestionable, and consequently a self-conscious authority in judging the political duties to be embraced by the Emperor is accepted. We will discuss this last element when dealing with the last letters of the 23rd book which, among others and for obvious reasons, ends with the *Ad Cesarem exhortatio ultima*. Let us limit ourselves here to the observation that this enthusiasm, with which Petrarch was saluted, in the inaugural letter of the 10th book, regarding his acceptance in

German lands, was actually not the enthusiasm evolving from secret hopes, but the recognition of a historical reality. The Empress would never have honored Petrarch by announcing to him the birth of her first-born (cf. *Familiaries* XXI, 8), nor would the high dignitaries at court have directed themselves to him as a *dominus* and a *magister* while constantly asking—and the Emperor among the first ones—for his physical presence at court (like Vergil's and Horace's presence at Augustus's court), if Petrarch would actually not have been the person who, after Ennius's words, could say of himself: 'Volito vivos per ora virum'. Furthermore, on the part of the great courtly circles, they did not limit themselves simply to praise Petrarch's Latin style as a point of reference for an authentic and unquestionable Latin speech. They asked, and with ever more growing insistence, for his works: the *De viris illustribus* in the *Stili magistralis* (of Johann, probably in 1358); the *expositio* of the *Bucolicum Carmen* of which Petrarch had sent a copy on 21 March 1361 (*Familiaries* XXIII, 6); the *De remediis utriusque fortune* together with all other 'arche tue grata pigmentaria quibus melius nosti imbecilles animos sacre tue doctrine remedio confoveri' (in the letter *Sicut Astaroth* of Johann, dated early 1362). At court he was hoped for—as the Visconti would want him in Milan and, later, the Carraresi in Padua—because the figure of the new intellectual, personified by Petrarch, gave splendor to this same political world. From this point of view, the intellectual's mission was a success.

Let us now turn to the 23rd book of the *Familiaries* where the presence of the Prague world is (so to speak) really prominent: no less than six letters to the Emperor and five to his Chancellor have been included. More than half of the letters of this book (and to this should be added the opening letter directed to Charles in an 'ideal' way) turn out to deal with the question of imperial government, of Caesar's duties, and the solid friendship which connects Petrarch to the Imperial Court. However, above all—and testimony of the degree of it is barely given—they insist on the renewed imperial invitation around 1362, and Petrarch's return to the Bohemian capital, as if transferring in the most ideal way (at least in a certain literary perspective of the poet) to the governing of Augustus (cf. in particular *Familiaries* XIII, 9 and 10, the first letter being directed to Charles, the second to Johann). This, for sure, is an important fact, and the more so if one considers the intense drama with which—at the very end of the *Familiaries*—the actual Italian situation is presented, a

situation to which no one seems capable of remedying. The book actually opens with a letter which—since it was useless to address it to Charles—is addressed directly to God. If no ruler on earth (so is Petrarch's essential statement) notices the elementary duty to stop such a catastrophe, whom on earth should one ask for help? One could direct oneself to a mortal of this world, at least if such a powerful person exists. But all such persons who could listen to you—the Brutus's, the Scipio's, the Caesars and the Trajans—are dead: 'Yes, to you I would speak—so the poet bursts out—at least if you were alive!'. In this invective he even repeats the phrase 'Utinam viveres! tibi loquerer' eleven times. But other powerful and willing listeners other than God do not exist; as a result, the writer directs his plea to God, a plea which gives this book—as will the ultimate exhortation to Caesar in *Familiars* XXIII, 21—that profound color of the Italian political tragedy. And immediately after this one, the second letter (dated Milan, 21 March 1361) is the first of the three exhortations for Charles to return to Italy. Moreover, this second letter is the longest, most stirring and passionate of them all, whereas it also recapitulates all preceding ones. In fact, Petrarch repeats what he said earlier, especially in *Familiars* X, 1 which he had sent for the first time in 1351 already. He reminds Caesar of the brevity of life and the irrevocable flying of time; he calls to his attention the coronation in Milan and Rome thwarted by his sudden return to Germany; he denounces more than ever the agreement he had settled with the Pope in 1346, to respect the sovereignty of the Church in Italy. This start, so dramatically and vigorously reinforced, may suffice as if someone proposed—seeing the imperial call as the cause of the poet's renewed his presence in Prague (letters 8–10 and 14)—to make this book a true 'Prague book'. But still other general observations are to be derived from this, observations which concern more directly the ideal self-image which Petrarch wanted to disperse at the end of his first letter collection. First of all, as is obvious, he emphasized the civilizing mission of Rome. In defending and celebrating the concept of the sacredness of a Roman-Imperial sovereignty on earth, Petrarch achieves to make his contribution to a tradition which would last long and which, by its connection to the contempt for the corruption in the Church, inserted itself in a highly dramatic and valuable ideology. In entertaining such fixed and continuous epistolary relations with the Bohemian circles, Petrarch intended to celebrate either himself as the first humanist or culture

itself which was reaching out of Italy into regions that until then were considered barbaric. Besides, the very presence of this culture was essential in the constitution of a new civil and social life. The names of Caesar and the first Bohemian humanists—on the ultimate threshold of the *Familiaries*—signify one thing to be watched carefully: the triumph of humanism in Europe.

Taken this general, perhaps rather quick glance at the 23rd book of the *Familiaries*, we turn to the epistolary exchange with Johann von Neumarkt. In the first months of 1361, the poet had received a letter from the Emperor of Milan, together with a letter from Johann which was not attached to it. Yet, copies of two documents were attached. They contained privileges which were accorded by Caesar to Nero and which were approved by Duke Rudolph IV of Austria in order to sustain the claiming of the autonomous sovereignty of Austria and of its independence from imperial jurisdiction. Charles therefore asked Petrarch to communicate to him his own opinion on the authenticity of these two documents in a discrete way and, among other things, he invited him to come to Prague. In a letter of 21 March 1361 (the one which would later become *Seniles* XVI, 5) Petrarch demonstrated that these documents were falsifications (as, so he added, would have been noticed immediately by the Imperial Chancellor, 'a man with the eyes of a lynx') and, in another letter dated 21 March as well—the *Familiaries* XXIII, 2 already mentioned—he rebuked the Emperor for his unacceptable delay in fulfilling his duties regarding Italy and its confrontation to the world.

His severe attack, however, required some excuse. And Petrarch, indeed, apologized to Johann in *Familiaries* XXIII, 6 (always dated 21 March 1361) since it had been the Chancellor's task to read out this biting Petrarchan invective to Charles. This is why he asked him now to understand and forgive his passionate reaction which had constrained him to 'paulo liberius frena mordere' and to talk with an excessive boldness. In this same letter, Petrarch also mentioned the fact that he had sent his *Bucolicum Carmen* to Prague, as well as that he would have added himself, with pleasure, as glossator (that is, in fact, going back to Bohemia again), if the Emperor would finally listen to his call: 'non prius [. . .] quam Cesarem [. . .] meis clamoribus experrectum audiero'. Well then, the dependence proposed between his own travel and the imperial counterattack in Italy does not only connect all the letters mentioned to a unique place, but also constitutes proof—in case this would have been

needed—of the prestige and authority acquired by Petrarch. In addition, they are proof of the fact that Petrarch's prestige and authority were strong since Charles addressed himself to Petrarch because, in his view, he was the only one who could solve delicate diplomatic questions, and since Charles (as we have already said) urgently requested his literary works: the *De viris illustribus*, the *Bucolicum Carmen*, the *De remediis*. These requests, however, were no mere formal calls. It would suffice to read the few lines of *Familiares* XXIII, 14, the ultimate letter from Johann to Petrarch, dated between 1362 and 1363, to understand how intensively the works of the Italian poet were read and expected: 'Magister et domine'—Johann opened his letter—'rogo vos instantia maiore quam possum, quatenus michi expositionem Eglogarum vestrarum quanto poteritis velocius dirigatis'; and this because the beauty of Petrarch's verses, as the courteous correspondent stated, remained mute to a large extent to the intellect of the transalpine reader.

To conclude with this planned, yet never completed, second travel to Prague, we have arrived at the last traces of an epistolary exchange between the poet and Johann von Neumarkt (one needs, of course, to mention that in the *Seniles* the question of the empire or the Emperor will not be raised again). In answering the letter *Sicut Astaroth* of the beginning of 1362, in which Johann had urged him to accept the Emperor's new invitation and not to disapprove of the company of coarse and barbaric people ('non te pigeat gentis videre grossitium'), Petrarch made it clear that he was at his disposal. But, he also specified that this would not happen soon. In any case, he would have traveled to Bohemia 'non ut doceam sed ut discam' and, especially, to benefit from Johann's teachings (*Familiares* XXIII, 10, 5). He equally stated in clear terms that Johann's behavior in life was of no less value than his wisdom and knowledge: if Socrates was regarded as the master of morals by Plato, Aristotle and Xenophon, the Chancellor was highly appraised by Petrarch. His was a kindness, for sure, and also, so to speak, a super-courtesy. This is not only reflected in his formal behavior, even if this behavior was also, and even particularly, determined by the courtly milieu he lived in. He needed to gain Petrarch's sympathy, to extend his influence on him, to let him hear his own free voice ever more loudly and authoritatively, to promulgate the image of a new cultural and political elite. And this interest was reciprocal.

The norm for which the government, intending to influence the international public in the first place, had to use the Latin quill of the Italian humanist—a norm which acquired ever more vigor and truth (it is sufficient to think about the success with which new intellectuals entered key functions at court and chancellery)—was newly confirmed in the period which we have examined here. And in this context (as we have tried to do for the rest) it will be worth the effort to observe the dosage and calibre applied by the writer when disposing his own texts along the complex itinerary of the *Familiaries*. These letters from Petrarch to Johann, in fact, are specifically context-bound in the framework of a project envisaging the *bene et recte vivere* and the constitution of a better civil society. To conclude finally and truly, it is no coincidence, I think, that the last letter from Petrarch to Johann—the *Familiaries* XXIII, 16 which bears the date Venice 27 August, probably 1363—is linked to the facts about which secure documentation is available. Taking the Chancellor's disappointment for not having been successful in providing the poet with something very important as a point of departure—a disappointment which is enveloped in an obstinate silence—the poet comforts his friend in a serene and smiling way for the failure of his generous attempt. At the same time, he incites him to take up their usual correspondence (which we can imagine as having been continuous even if it is not more documented or selected in his collection). 'Volebas me magnum aliquid facere; non successit; at quod nemo vetuerit, parvum ama' (*Familiaries* XXIII, 16, 2). Apart from its general questioning to which he refers, it is also because of its final position that this letter seems dictated by ideal reasons—as if it were a sort of short testament written by a man of culture living amidst political agitation: 'Michi iam pauca sufficiunt. Si naturam meque sequor, non sat modo sed abunde, usque quoque ad invidiam locuples sum' (§ 4). And to this stoically inspired confession, meditated on for a long time and proposed here again, one observes how he adds more moving thoughts than the ones we will hear echoing, in other phrasings and different circumstances, in his epistolary collection of his old age: 'Et siquid etiam forte nunc deforet, en senectus in limine expetita votis hospes, morsque illi a tergo adequatrix optima, secumque divitie ingentes, nulla scilicet amplius re egere' (§ 4). The theme of the *aurea mediocritas*, moral saying of this new civil life, almost evaporates into a more personal heartbeat in the conscious and firm expectation of the end of his own earthly existence.



TABLE OF THE EPISTOLARY EXCHANGE  
BETWEEN PETRARCH AND JOHANN VON NEUMARKT

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<i>Utinam Pamasei</i>	end of 1353	
<i>Fam.</i> , X, 6	end of 1353	Answers to <i>Utinam Pamasei</i>
<i>Aureis redimita</i>	May 1354	short note to <i>Fam.</i> , XVIII, 1
<i>Saphirei fundamenti</i>	March 1355	short note to <i>Fam.</i> , XIX, 4
<i>Misc.</i> , 12	Milan, 25 March 1355	perhaps an answer to <i>Saphirei fundamenti</i>

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PETRARCH'S MISSION IN PRAGUE (20 MAY–AUGUST 1356)

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<i>De fecundo pectore</i>	First months of 1357	
<i>Fam.</i> XXI, 2	Milan, 29 April 1357	Answers to <i>De fecundo pectore</i>
	30 April in $\beta$	
<i>Persuasiva dulcedo</i>	1357 or the first months of 1358	Perhaps a reply to <i>Fam.</i> XXI, 2
<i>Fam.</i> XXI, 5	Milan, 25 March 1358	Answers to <i>Persuasiva dulcedo</i>
<i>Stili magistralis</i>	1358?	
<i>Fam.</i> XXIII, 6	Milan, 25 March 1361	Connected to <i>Fam.</i> XXIII, 2 (to Charles IV)
<i>Fam.</i> XXIII, 7	Perhaps 18 July 1361	
<i>Sicut Astaroth</i>	Beginning of 1362	
<i>Fam.</i> XXIII, 10	Milan, 21 March 1362	
<i>Rogo vos</i>		Answers to <i>Sicut Astaroth</i>
<i>Fam.</i> XXIII, 14	Venice, March 1363	
<i>Fam.</i> XXIII, 16	Venice, 27 August 1363	Written shortly after <i>Fam.</i> XXIII, 15 to Charles IV

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PETRARCH IN 16TH-CENTURY GERMANY:  
THE CASE OF THE 'PETRARCH MASTER'



DER PETRARCA DES ‚PETRARCA-MEISTERS‘:  
ZUM TEXT-BILD-VERHÄLTNIS IN ILLUSTRIERTEN  
*DE REMEDIIS*-AUSGABEN

Karl A.E. Enenkel

*Einleitung*

Im 16. Jahrhundert avancierte Petrarca mit seinen *De remediis utriusque fortune* im deutschen Sprachraum zum Bestseller-Autor. Dabei spielen die deutschen Übersetzungen, die mit 261 Holzschnitten eines anonymen Augsburger Künstlers ausgestattet sind, der den Namen „Petrarca-Meister“ erhalten hat, eine herausragende Rolle. Da diese zwischen 1532 und 1620 in einer Reihe von Auflagen erschienen,<sup>1</sup> darf man davon ausgehen, dass sie von einer Vielzahl von Lesern, Betrachtern und Benutzern verwendet wurden. Es ist somit klar, dass dieses Text-Bild-Kombinat die Petrarca-Rezeption im deutschsprachigen Raum wesentlich mitgestaltet hat.

Von der Art, wie Text und Bild in den vom Petrarca-Meister illustrierten *De remediis*-Ausgaben funktionieren und wie sie sich zueinander verhalten, besitzen bisher kein befriedigendes Bild. Fraenger hat als Hauptleistung des Petrarca-Meisters angesehen, dass er sich von den didaktischen Vorgaben emanzipierte, und auf diesem Weg anstatt zu obligatorischen moralischen Instruktionen zu „reinen Schaubildern“, einer Art von Genre-Szenen, gelangte.<sup>2</sup> Das ‚Schaubild‘ wird als fortschrittlich, die moralische Belehrung als rückschrittlich aufgefasst. Der in der ehemaligen DDR tätige Walther Scheidig hat

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<sup>1</sup> Augsburg, H. Steyner: 1532; 1539; Frankfurt, Ch. Egenolff: 1551; 1559; 1572; 1583; 1584; 1596; Frankfurt: 1604; 1620; 1672; Lüneburg: 1637.

<sup>2</sup> Fraenger W., *Altdeutsches Bilderbuch. Hans Weiditz und Sebastian Brant* (Leipzig: 1930). Die Identifikation des Petrarca-Meisters mit Hans Weiditz (so schon Röttinger H., *Hans Weiditz, der Petrarca-Meister* (Straßburg: 1904)) hat sich nicht als stichhaltig herausgestellt. Für andere (ebenfalls gescheiterte) Identifizierungsversuche des Petrarca-Meisters vgl. Lanckoronska M. Gräfin, „Weiteres zur Identifizierung des Petrarca-meisters“, *Stultifera navis* 11 (1954) 35–43; dies., „Die Burgkmair-Werkstatt und der Petrarcameister“, *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 29 (1954) 171–180; dies., „Der Petrarca-Meister und Hans Brosamer. Ein Stilvergleich“, *Gutenberg-Jahrbuch* 32 (1957) 254–263.

einen ersten Versuch gemacht, den Sinn der Bilder im Einzelnen zu erklären,<sup>3</sup> welcher trotz seiner Verdienste daran leidet, dass Petrarcas Text nicht oder nur ganz oberflächlich berücksichtigt wird, dass methodische Schlussfolgerungen zum Text-Bild-Verhältnis fehlen und dass der Petrarca-Meister als Präsozialist aufgefasst wird. Die jüngere Literatur – Raupp (1984), Knappe (1992) sowie Wohlfeil und Wohlfeil (1988) – zeichnet vom Text-Bild-Verhältnis ein simplifizierendes Unisono-Bild, wonach Text und Bild eine genau auf einander abgestimmte Einheit darstellen und dasselbe bewirken.<sup>4</sup> Die Bilder gehen nach diesen Autoren „auf eine eingehende Textkenntnis zurück“ und befinden sich „in genauer sinngemäßer Übereinstimmung mit dem Text“.<sup>5</sup> Nach Knappe, Raupp sowie Wohlfeil und Wohlfeil stellen die Abbildungen „Lehrbilder“ dar, die den Lehrinhalt von Petrarcas Text vermitteln.<sup>6</sup> Zusätzlich meint Raupp, dass der Bild-Inventor absichtlich oft den Standpunkt der Emotion wiedergegeben habe, um der Text-Ratio umso nachdrücklicher zum Sieg zu verhelfen. Implizit gehen diese Forscher von der Annahme aus, dass sich Text und Bild im selben Diskurs befinden und denselben Sinn vermitteln.

<sup>3</sup> Scheidig W., *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* (Berlin: 1955).

<sup>4</sup> Raupp H.-J., „Die Illustrationen zu Francesco Petrarca „Von der Artzney bayder Glueck des guten und des widerwertigen“ (Augsburg 1532)“, in *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 45 (1984) 59–112; Knappe J., *Dichtung, Recht und Freiheit. Studien zu Leben und Werk Sebastian Brants 1457–1521* (Baden-Baden: 1992) 271–317; Wohlfeil R. – Wohlfeil T., „Verbildlichung ständischer Gesellschaft. Bartholomäus Bruyn d.Ä. – Petrarcameister (mit Exkursen von Marlies Minuth und Heike Talkenberger)“, in Schulze W. (Hrsg.), *Ständische Gesellschaft und soziale Mobilität* (München: 1988) 269–331, bsd. 308–319.

<sup>5</sup> Raupp, „Die Illustrationen zu Francesco Petrarca“ 77.

<sup>6</sup> Nach Raupp und Knappe „resümieren“ manche Holzschnitte „die Lehraussage“, geben andere Holzschnitte Exempla wieder, die im Text auftreten, während andere „neue Motive und Argumente einführen, die jedoch die Lehre des Textes bekräftigen“; s. Raupp, „Die Illustrationen zu Francesco Petrarca“ 100, Knappe, *Dichtung, Recht und Freiheit* 298. Wohlfeil und Wohlfeil, „Verbildlichung ständischer Gesellschaft“ 314 schließen sich diesem optimistischen Bild an: „Nicht selten löste der Künstler meisterhaft die Schwierigkeiten, humanistische Gedanken in eine Form zu kleiden, wie sie Lehr- und Lesebilder erforderten“. Wenn die angenommene Kontingenz von Text und Bild ins Gedränge gerät, ist dies nach Knappe auf eine Art Autorsintention, nämlich auf einen „absichtlichen Wunsch nach Verrätselung“ zurückzuführen (ebd.). M. Lemmer räumt in seinem Nachwort zur Facsimile-Ausgabe (Leipzig: 1984) 202, ein, dass es eine „große Zahl von Illustrationen“ gäbe, „die den Textsinn nur unvollkommen herausarbeiten“. Dies schreibt er jedoch sowohl der großen Anzahl der erforderlichen Illustrationen als auch den Schwierigkeiten zu, die die Verbildlichung des philosophischen Textes bereitet habe.

Für diese simplifizierende Identifikation des Textdiskurses mit dem Bilddiskurs und des Textsinnes mit dem Bildsinn berufen sich die genannten Forscher auf einen Humanisten als Garanten dieser schönen Einheitlichkeit, auf den Straßburger Lateinkundigen Sebastian Brant. Ihrer Meinung nach war Brant der „Bildredaktor“<sup>7</sup> der Ausgabe, der Erfinder der „Bildkonzepte“, ja nach Lemmer der maßgebliche Schöpfer der Bild-Inventionen.<sup>8</sup> Dabei gehen sie von einer Bemerkung des Verlegers Steyner aus, dass „der hochgelehrte doctor Sebastian Brant“ „versierliche angebungē“ gemacht habe, und von der Annahme, dass dem Petrarca-Meister die deutsche Übersetzung nicht vorlag.<sup>9</sup>

Ohne zu bestreiten, dass Brant an dem Projekt beteiligt war, meine ich, dass seine Rolle keinesfalls so einfach ist, wie es die Bezeichnungen „Bildredaktor“ bzw. Schöpfer der Bild-Inventionen suggerieren. Das ist von den Rahmenbedingungen her schon wenig wahrscheinlich.<sup>10</sup> Bei den Bemerkung Steyners muss man m.E. den rhetorischen Status des Textes mitberücksichtigen. Die Bemerkung steht in einem *Werbetext*. Steyner verleiht durch den Hinweis auf den berühmten Humanisten Brant den Illustrationen und damit der gesamten Ausgabe Autorität und Ansehen. Es ist kein Zufall, dass er Brant an dieser Stelle das *epitheton ornans* des „hochgelehrten doctors“ beigibt: Auch das soll Autorität und Ansehen generieren.

<sup>7</sup> So auch M. Lemmer in seinem „Nachwort“ 200: „Dass der *Bildredaktor* Brant bei diesem Verfahren für die Transponierung der Grundgedanken eines jeden Kapitels von Petrarca's Traktat in eine „Bildzeichensprache“ hohen Anteil hatte, leuchtet ein [...]“.

<sup>8</sup> Lemmer behauptet, dass die ganze „inhaltlich-geistige Seite“ auf Brant zurückgehe, während der Petrarca-Meister lediglich in der „künstlerischen Ausgestaltung“ „Freiheit und Spielraum“ hatte. Lemmer, „Nachwort“ 200.

<sup>9</sup> Tatsächlich kann man nicht ausschließen, dass das von Peter Stahel übersetzte *erste* Buch dem Petrarca-Meister vorlag. Vgl. unten.

<sup>10</sup> Wie immer seine nicht erhaltenen Angaben ausgesehen haben, klar ist soviel, dass sie nur eine ganz knappe Form gehabt haben können. Dies lässt sich aus den Angaben erschließen, die Brant zu den Illustrationen eines eigenen Werkes, der „Freiheitstafel“ gemacht hat. Z.B. zu Nr. 21 gibt er an: „Ein nackend kindlin hat in der rechten handt ein kloben“. Nun weist die Freiheitstafel 50 Illustrationen, *De remedii*s aber 254 Kapitel auf, die illustriert werden mussten. Wenn Brant zu den 254 Kapiteln ausführliche Bilderklärungen geliefert hätte, hätte das den Umfang eines ganzen Buches ergeben. Dass Brant ein derartig kurioes Projekt ausgeführt haben soll, erscheint mir nicht plausibel. Gänzlich unwahrscheinlich ist meiner Meinung, dass Brant zu den 254 Kapiteln auch noch Vorzeichnungen oder Skizzen geliefert hätte. Es lässt sich nicht leicht verstehen, aus welchem Grund der vielbeschäftigte und betagte Gelehrte dies als seine Aufgabe betrachtet haben sollte.



In der vorliegenden Studie will ich mich mit den vom Petrarca-Meister illustrierten *De remediis*-Ausgaben auf eine andere Weise auseinandersetzen. Meiner Meinung gestalten sich Text-Bildkombinate in der Frühen Neuzeit weitaus komplexer und beruhen auf anderen Ausgangspunkten, als oft angenommen wird. Illustratoren betrachteten es in der Regel nicht als ihre wichtigste Aufgabe, den Inhalt eines Textes möglichst genau und kontingent „abzubilden“. Die Wirkung der Bi-Medialität beruht in der Frühen Neuzeit meines Erachtens oft gerade darauf, dass Text und Bild *nicht* genau dasselbe tun und *nicht* auf denselben diskursiven Gleisen fahren. Memorative und meditative Prozesse werden von Bildern gefördert und gespeist, auch ohne dass diese die Textaussage einfach reduplizieren. Daher erscheint es mir fruchtbar, einmal von der universalen Autorserklärung „Brant“ abzugehen und stattdessen die Diskursivität und die Rhetorik des Textes und des Bildes genau zu analysieren und mit einander zu vergleichen. Es sind jeweils die folgenden Fragen zu stellen: Wovon redet der Text? Wovon reden die Bilder? Wie funktioniert die Text-Rhetorik, wie die Bild-Rhetorik? Sodann ist zu fragen: Was leisten die Bilder in Bezug auf die Perzeption des Textes? Welche Petrarca-Rezeption suggerieren die Bilder?

### *Petrarcas stoisch-christliches Meditationshandbuch*

Versuchen wir zuerst, die Funktionsweise, Rhetorik und Wirkungsweise des Textes näher zu bestimmen: Mit *De remediis* hat Petrarca in grossem Stil stoisches Denken in die intellektuelle Kultur des Spätmittelalters eingebracht. Das Werk funktioniert als Meditationshandbuch, das den Leser durch methodisch angelegte geistige Übungen anleitet, äußere Einflüsse so zu verarbeiten, dass seine Geistesruhe (*tranquillitas animi*) gewährleistet bleibt und er von Schicksalsschlägen unabhängig wird. *De remediis* bildet also eine mächtige intellektuelle Maschine, deren Besitz für ihren Benutzer äußerst wertvoll ist. Die Kernmethode dieser Machina ist die stoische *Affektbekämpfung*: Trauer (*dolor*) und Freude (*gaudium*), Angst (*metus*) und Hoffnung (*spes*) müssen unschädlich und mundtot gemacht werden. Der Stoiker vertritt die Meinung, dass die völlige Unterdrückung der Affekte die wichtigste Voraussetzung der philosophischen Lebensweise ist. In ihr regiert die Ratio, mit welcher der Weise alles zu kontrollieren vermag. Das Lehrziel ist, die Ratio mit einem operativen Arsenal von Argumenten auszustat-

ten, mit denen sie die aufkommenden Affekte je unterdrücken und möglichst vernichten kann. In Studien wird immer wieder betont, dass *De remediis* als Dialog angelegt sei. Das ist jedoch einigermaßen irreführend: In *De remediis* sind keine Dialogpersonen vorhanden; Ratio und die Affekte werden nicht personifiziert gedacht. *De remediis* gibt vielmehr einen innerlichen Prozess wieder, in dem der rationale Teil des Menschen den emotionalen bekämpft, bezwingt und unter seine Kontrolle bringt. Die Emotionen haben in diesem Buch nicht das Sagen. Sie können nur auf stereotype, dumme Weise hervorbringen, dass es sie gibt.<sup>11</sup> In ca. 95% des Werkes redet die Ratio. Es ist also sie, die das Sagen hat. Die Aussage von *De remediis* wird oft, besonders von Kunsthistorikern, als „humanistisch“ angegeben. Das ist freilich ein unspezifisches Label, das zu Ungenauigkeiten führt. *De remediis* ist nicht als humanistisches Manifest konzipiert: Die stoische Affektbekämpfung positiver Werte wird auch für typisch humanistische Werte wie Schriftstellerei, Dichterruhm und Bücherbesitz durchgesetzt. Die Argumentation (der Ratio) ist vielmehr so angelegt, dass sie sich mit der christlichen Religion verträgt. Petrarcas stoische Destruktion wird vom Christentum gemäßigt: In Bezug auf alles, was mit Gott, der christlichen Religion, der katholischen Kirche, den Sakramenten etc. zu tun hat, sind also Emotionen wie Freude grundsätzlich erlaubt, d.h. die stoische Affekttötung wird in diesem Bereich nicht durchgesetzt. Diese wird vom Regulativ ersetzt, dass die Emotion Freude (*gaudium*) nicht in Übermut und Überheblichkeit (*superbia*) umschlagen darf.

### *Verlagerung in den Diskurs Lutheranischer Religionspolemik*

Wenden wir uns einem solchen Beispiel zu, Kap. I, 13 „De religione“ („Von der Religion“). Die Text-Machina entfaltet den gerade skizzierten Denkprozess. Die *Ratio* gesteht *Gaudium* zu, sich über die Zugehörigkeit zur christlichen, der einzig wahren Religion zu freuen, plädiert dabei jedoch für Demut und Vermeidung der *superbia*.

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<sup>11</sup> Die Stereotypie wird durch minimale Variationen unterstrichen, z.B.: „ich freue mich über gutes Essen“ – „gutes Essen freut mich“ – „mich freut gutes Essen“. Damit wird angezeigt, dass der Affekt nichts dazulernt. Man kann ihn nur unterdrücken, meist am besten abtöten.

Wie funktioniert die Bildrhetorik [Abb. 1; Abb. 4, Blickführungsskizze zu I, 13]? Der Blickfänger ist zunächst eine wohlgenährte Katze, die auf einem Felsen hockt, den Schleier einer Nonne trägt und in den Pfötchen einen riesigen Rosenkranz hält (A). Dies führt den zeitgenössischen Betrachter geradewegs in einen Sprichwortdiskurs. Er erkennt, dass hier die sprichwörtliche „klosterkatze“ verbildlicht wird.<sup>12</sup> Die Vorgabe des Sprichworts ist eine pauschale Distanzierung von den Mönchen: als faule, gefräßige und geile Wesen, wie man sich etwa Katzen dachte. Sodann bewegt sich der Blick des Betrachters zu der Figur links, die sich der Katze zuwendet – ein Mönch (B). Dadurch wird der erste Eindruck zunächst einmal bestätigt: Die Bildrhetorik scheint sich gegen die Mönche zu richten. Jedoch erblickt der Bildleser links hinter dem Mönch zwei Priester (C). Der Priester vorne versucht den Rock des Mönches emporzuheben, was schwerlich aus lauterer Motiven geschieht. Das bestätigt der Priester, der danebensteht, so nahe, dass ihm der Sachverhalt nicht entgehen kann: Er reagiert auf das Sodomieverhalten, indem er mit gefalteten Händen und schmerzverzerrtem Gesicht krampfhaft wegzublicken versucht. Der Betrachter hat jetzt entdeckt, dass die Bildrhetorik gegen den Klerus insgesamt gerichtet ist, der durch eine große Anzahl von Häuptern (25) angedeutet wird (D).<sup>13</sup> Der Betrachter registriert nunmehr, dass sich alle Häupter der Klosterkatze (A) zuwenden. Somit erkennt er, dass der herandrängende Klerus die „klosterkatze“ verehrt. Es handelt sich offensichtlich um einen Abgottdienst: Die „klosterkatze“ sitzt auf dem Felsensockel wie auf einem Thron. Zu dieser Lesart lädt überdies die gerade vorhergehende Abbildung ein, die den Abgottdienst des Königs Salomon ins Bild gebracht hatte [Abb. 2]. Der Bildleser erkennt nunmehr zu seinem Erschrecken in der Katze einen Dämon – ein Eindruck, der durch die Tatsache verstärkt wird, dass die Katze in der Frühen Neuzeit als Begleiterin des Teufels galt. Der riesige Rosenkranz der Katze erhält nunmehr

<sup>12</sup> L. Röhrich, *Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten* (München: 2001) 856–857 s.v. „Klosterkatze“. Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 57 weist nicht auf die Sprichwörtlichkeit hin, sondern vermag darin nur eine direkte Entlehnung aus Brants *Narrenschiff* zu sehen.

<sup>13</sup> Ein kohärenzförderndes Detail ist, dass das Gesicht der Nonne ganz links dem der „klosterkatze“ ganz ähnlich ist.



Abb. 1. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel I, 13.

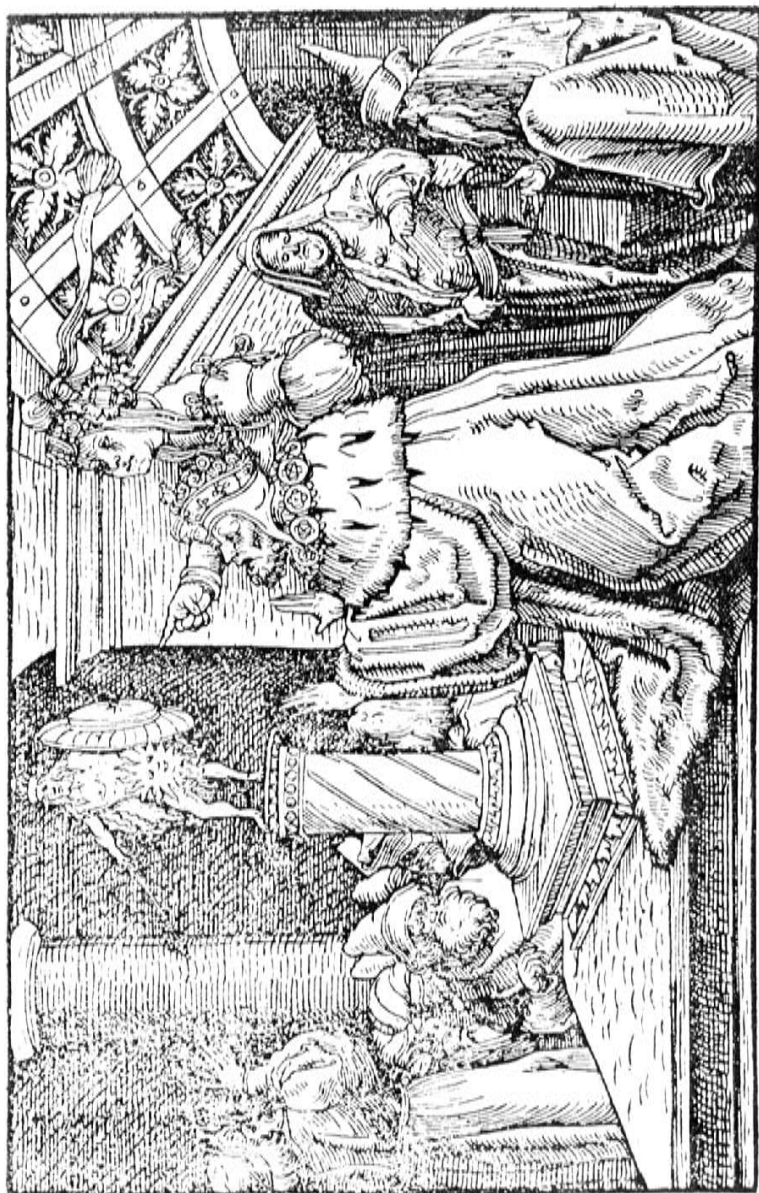


Abb. 2. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel I, 12.

eine neue Funktion: Er avanciert zum Kultattribut des Abgottdienstes. Der Bildleser bemerkt, dass alle im Vordergrund ins Bild gebrachten Abgottdiener den Rosenkranz demonstrativ vor sich her tragen.

Nachdem der Leser entdeckt hat, dass hier ein Abgottdienst verbildlicht wird, erkennt er, dass der Götze ein Pendant zugeordnet ist, rechts oben im Hintergrund: Dort befindet sich, ebenfalls auf einem Felsensockel, Petrus, der von Gott die Schlüssel zum Zeichen der Legitimierung des Papsttums erhält (E). Die Parallelposition von Katze und Petrus ist auffällig: Beide Figuren sind in derselben Richtung  $\frac{3}{4}$  gedreht, zudem hebt Petrus etwas tapsig beide Hände empor, eine Bewegung, die den aufgerichteten Pfötchen einer Katze ähnelt. Auf anderen maßgeblichen Darstellungen der Schlüsselübergabe, z.B. Peruginos Fresco im Vatikan, greift Petrus nicht mit beiden Händen nach dem Schlüssel [Abb. 3].<sup>14</sup> Am Ende des komplexen Denk- bzw. Bildleseprozesses [vgl. Abb. 4, Blickführungsskizze zu I, 13] steht die aufwühlende Konstituierung *des Papsttums als Götzendienst*.

Es dürfte zunächst klar sein, dass die Bildwirkung hier nicht mit der Textwirkung identisch ist. In der Text-Meditation der Ratio kommt es nicht zu einer Ablehnung des Papsttums als Götzendienst noch wird eine solche suggeriert. Nebenbei ist evident, dass Brant, der zeit seines Lebens ein guter Katholik war, schwerlich der Erfinder der Bild-Invention in dieser Form gewesen sein kann.<sup>15</sup>

Was leistet also das Bild in Bezug auf die Textrezeption? – Es bereitete das Kapitel über die Religion für ein Lesepublikum von Luther-Anhängern auf. Luther hatte um 1520 in Augsburg zahlreiche Anhänger; im Augsburger Dom predigten Oecolampadius und Urbanus Rhegius Lutheranische Ansichten.<sup>16</sup> Als 1520 die Bannbulle Leos X. in Augsburg gedruckt werden sollte, fand sich kein einziger Augsburger Drucker dazu bereit.<sup>17</sup> M.E. hat der Petrarca-Meister den deutschen Text des Kapitels gelesen: „Die beste und vollkommene Religion ist die eine, auf den Namen Christi und auf den

<sup>14</sup> Fresko in der Sixtinischen Kapelle.

<sup>15</sup> Scheidig (*Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 57) vertritt merkwürdigerweise die Ansicht, dass Brant hier dennoch der Bild-Inventor sei, der den Text Petrarcas durch die Abbildung „ergänzt“ habe, weil er ihm „unzulänglich und unkritisch erschienen“ sei.

<sup>16</sup> Rummel P. und Zorn W., „Kirchengeschichte 1518–1650“, in *Welt im Umbruch. Augsburg zwischen Renaissance und Barock* (Augsburg: 1980) 31–32.

<sup>17</sup> Ebd. Die Bulle musste schließlich in Ingolstadt gedruckt werden.



Abb. 3. Pietro Perugino, Schlüsselübergabe, Fresko, Sixtinische Kapelle.

unverrückbaren Felsen gebaute. Alle anderen sind Abgottdienste“.<sup>18</sup> Nun ist das Bild keinesfalls eine Abbildung des Textinhalts, im Gegenteil: Der Text forderte im Hinblick auf die Augsburger Situation von 1520 zu einem *widerlegenden* Kommentar heraus. Der „starke Fels“ symbolisierte immerhin Petrus, und diesem hatte Luther gerade 1520 in seiner Schrift *Von dem Papsttum zu Rom* die Legitimität aberkannt. Die Schlüsselgewalt übertrug Luther anstatt des Papstes der Christusgemeinde.<sup>19</sup> Das Bild ist hier also wesentlich darauf ausgerichtet, *den Text zu widerlegen*.

Es ist somit ersichtlich geworden, dass das Bild eine Aussage vermittelt, die sowohl einem anderen religiösen Diskurs zugehört als auch die Textaussage in krasser Weise contrafakturiert. Für das Leseangebot, das Petrarcas Text macht – das des stoisch-christlichen Meditationshandbuchs – hat das eine einschneidende Folge: Die Funktionsweise des Meditationshandbuchs war darauf ausgerichtet, beim Leser einen innerlichen Formationsprozess in Gang zu setzen, der seinen Geist vom Status der Emotionsbestimmtheit in den Zustand der Ratio-Bestimmtheit bringen sollte. *Es geht also wesentlich um spirituelle Arbeit an sich selbst*. Wenn der Bild-Inventor diese grundsätzliche Ausrichtung des Meditationshandbuchs respektieren hätte wollen, so hätte er das Bild so einrichten müssen, dass die handelnden Personen im positiven Sinn als der eigenen und wahren Religion zugehörig markiert sind. Nur in diesem Fall wäre die Bildwirkung der spirituellen Arbeit an sich selbst gewährleistet gewesen. In Bezug auf die zeitgenössische Konkretisierung würde dies bedeutet haben, dass der „Religiöse“ von Kap. I, 13 als Lutheraner gekennzeichnet hätte werden müssen. Stattdessen lagerte der Bild-Inventor die Kritik der Ratio zur katholischen Seite hin aus. Diese Auslagerungstechnik wirkt jedoch der spirituellen Arbeit an sich selbst, wie sie die Funktionsweise des Meditationsbuchs vorsieht, entgegen. *Das Bild redet nicht vom Selbst, sondern von den „Anderen“*, den feindlichen und verwerflichen Katholiken.

Was bedeutet diese Erkenntnis für die Text-Rezeption? Es kann wohl nicht die Absicht des Bild-Inventors gewesen sein, dass das Bild

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<sup>18</sup> Das ergibt sich daraus, dass die Bild-Invention als Widerlegung des 2. und 3. Satzes von Petrarcas Text aufzufassen ist. Wenn es stimmt, dass der Petrarca-Meister den deutschen Text schon für Kap. I,13 benutzt hat, so ergibt sich in der Datierungsfrage die Schlussfolgerung, dass wohl der gesamte Bildzyklus 1520 gezeichnet und geschnitten worden ist.

<sup>19</sup> Vgl. Iserloh E., *Geschichte und Theologie der Reformation im Grundriß* (Paderborn: 1985, 3. Aufl.) 37–40.



den Text unlesbar machen sollte. Eher scheint zuzutreffen, dass es dem Bild-Inventor darum zu tun war, dass der Leser den Text *auf eine bestimmte Weise* rezipieren sollte. Für den Fall der linearen Lektüre bringt dies das Leseangebot mit sich, den Text in Lutheranischem Sinn als Kritik an dem stolzen katholischen Klerus aufzufassen. Das Autorsbild Petrarcas, mit dem das Bild den Leser ausstattet, ist das eines Religionspolemikers in Lutheranischem Sinn.

Das Bild macht ein weiteres Leseangebot, das sich auf einer höheren Abstraktionsebene befindet. Die Rhetorik des Bildes ist auf *Demaskierung* ausgerichtet. Der Denkprozess, den sie in Gang setzt, kann man sogar als *schrittweise Demaskierung* bezeichnen [vgl. Abb. 4, Blickführungsskizze zu I, 13]. Der Denkprozess, den die Ratio im Text steuert, richtet sich ebenfalls auf Demaskierung, allerdings jeweils der sinnlichen Eindrücke, Ereignisse und mentalen Automatismen, welche zum Status der Emotionsbestimmtheit führen. Allerdings ist festzuhalten, dass das Bild die einzelnen Demaskierungsschritte der Text-Ratio keinesfalls redupliziert, sondern diese *durch andere ersetzt* und contrafakturiert.

Wenn man von der spezifischen Verfasstheit der Demaskierung absieht, könnte sich die Bildwirkung ergeben, dass der Leser auf eine demaskierende Gedankenführung eingestimmt wird, die jeweils darauf ausgerichtet ist, äußeren Schein von wahren, innerlichen Sachverhalten zu trennen. Diese *Demaskierungsrhetorik* des Petrarca-Meisters lässt sich in einer großen Anzahl von Bild-Inventionen dingfest machen. Aus dieser Tatsache geht es passend hervor, dass Raupps Annahme, der Petrarca-Meister hätte in seinen Bildern den Standpunkt der Affekte vertreten wollen, nicht stimmen kann. Die Abbildungen zeigen zwar häufig den Gegenstand des Affekts, *widerlegen ihn jedoch im Bild selbst* mit Hilfe von Demaskierungstechniken.

Die Demaskierungsrhetorik der Bilder bedient sich einer Reihe unterschiedlicher Mittel. Dazu gehören u.a. die *Überdimensionierung* einzelner Bildelemente mit dem Effekt grotesker Übertreibung (vgl. den riesigen Rosenkranz der Katze), der Bildkommentar durch eine *Hintergrundszene* (Petrus empfängt die Schlüssel), der Bildkommentar mittels der Wiederholung von Bildelementen, die augenfällige *Parallelstellung* von Figuren oder Figurengruppen (z.B. Katze – Petrus), die *axiale Dekonstruktion* des Bildes, ein *ungewöhnlicher Blickwinkel* bzw. Standpunkt des Betrachters. Z.B. zeigt der Petrarca-Meister den Bildgegenstand, der demaskiert werden soll, mehrfach von hinten oder in einer anderen unvoreilhaftigen Position oder von einem ungewohnten,

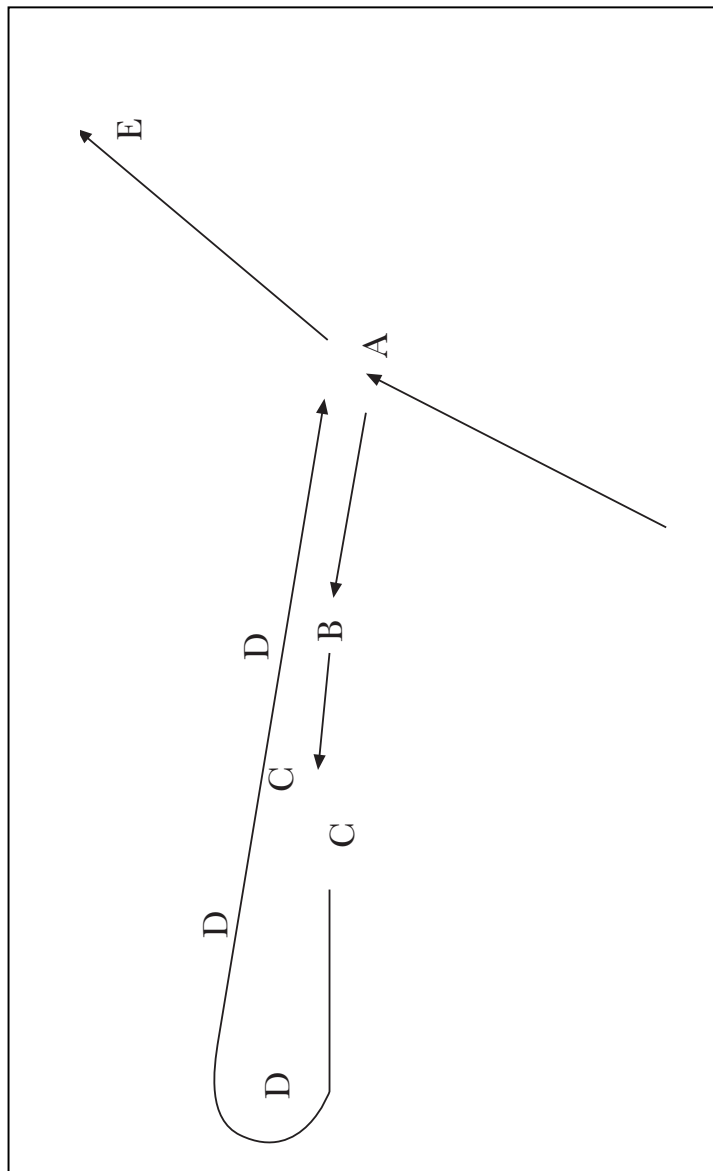


Abb. 4. Blickführungsskizze zu Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt I, 13.

„entwertenden“ Standpunkt des Betrachters aus. Nicht selten kombiniert der Petrarca-Meister zwei oder mehrere Mittel seiner Demaskierungsrhetorik.

Ein aufschlussreiches Beispiel dafür ist das Bild zu Kap. I, 122 „De spe vite eterne“ („Von der Hoffnung auf das ewige Leben“), das besonders interessant ist, weil sein Text eben *nicht* auf Demaskierung abzielt. Petrarca behandelt im Schlusskapitel des ersten Buches den höchsten, geradezu unwiderlegbaren Gefühlswert des Christen, die freudige Hoffnung auf das ewige Leben. Auf diese positive Transzendentalerwartung hin war bekanntlich die gesamte christliche Lebensführung ausgerichtet, egal ob es sich um Laien oder Kleriker handelt. Die Text-Rhetorik ist klar ersichtlich in einer solchen Weise organisiert, dass die Ratio die Emotion nicht widerlegt, sondern prinzipiell bestätigt:

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| Spes:  | Spero aeternam vitam.   |
| Ratio: | Nulla maior, nulla pulchrior, nulla sanctor spes, modo non caeca praecepsve sit [. . .] |
| Spes:  | Vitam spero aeternam.   |
| Ratio: | Rem bonam, immo optimam speras. Illud vide, ut quod bonum agis, agas bene [. . .]       |
| Spes:  | Spero vitam aeternam.   |
| Ratio: | Una omnium spes est, quae si rite illam concipis, et felicem te faciet et iam facit.    |
- 
- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Hoffnung: | Ich hoffe auf das ewige Leben.   |
| Verstand: | Es gibt keine Hoffnung, die größer, schöner und heiliger ist als diese, vorausgesetzt natürlich, sie ist nicht blind und unüberlegt [. . .]        |
| Hoffnung: | Auf das ewige Leben hoffe ich.   |
| Verstand: | Du hoffst auf eine gute, ja die beste Sache. Sieh nur zu, dass du das Gut, das du erstrebst, auf eine gute Weise erstrebst [. . .]                 |
| Hoffnung: | Ich hoffe auf das ewige Leben.   |
| Verstand: | Das ist die einzige Hoffnung aller. Wenn du sie auf die richtige Weise hegst, wird sie dich glücklich machen, ja sie macht dich bereits glücklich. |

Während die Text-Rhetorik in diesem Fall in keiner Weise zu demaskieren versucht, fährt die Bildrhetorik [Abb. 5] hier auf völlig anderen Gleisen. Zunächst einmal identifiziert sie die Hoffnung auf das ewige Leben mit der katholischen Messe, die im Text *nicht* genannt wird. Vor allem aber setzt sie gerade einen kräftigen Demaskierungsprozess in Gang. Der Blick des Betrachters fällt auf den knienden

Patrizier links (A), der von einem mächtigen Engel in den Griff genommen wird, der seinen Blick in die Längsachse des Bildes durch eine Umklammerungstechnik geradezu gewaltsam<sup>20</sup> ‚einordnet‘ [Abb. 6, Blickführungsskizze zu I, 122]. Die axiale Ausrichtung der Blickführung läuft von links nach rechts und von unten nach oben: kniender Ministrant (B), katholischer Priester (C), erhobene Hostie („Leib Christi“, D), Kerze 1 (E), Heiligenbild auf Altar (F) [Abb. 6, Blickführungsskizze zu I, 122]. Der Betrachter erkennt, durch die Blickführung des Bildaufbaus gesteuert, dass es sich bei dem Geschehen um den heiligsten Augenblick der katholischen Messe handelt, um die Transsubstantion, die Wandlung. Merkwürdig ist nun, dass der oberste Punkt der von unten links nach oben rechts geführten Bildachse außerhalb des Bildes liegt, bzw. nicht im Bild dargestellt wird – das Haupt der Heiligenstatue auf dem Altar. Die Heiligenstatue wird damit gewissermaßen enthauptet. Dadurch kehrt der Blick des Betrachters unverrichteter Dinge zu der brennenden Kerze zurück. Dabei entdeckt er, dass sich auf derselben Höhe in der Bildmitte eine zweite brennende Kerze befindet. Diese markiert eine zweite Bildachse, die im Winkel von 90 Grad zur ersten angelegt ist und über den Ministranten (B), die Kerze 2 (G), den zweiten Kirchengänger (H) und eine Balustrade (I) führt [Abb. 6, Blickführungsskizze zu I, 122]. Den Endpunkt dieser Bildachse bildet ein wilder Dämon im Hintergrund, der über und hinter der Balustrade wütet (K) [Abb. 5]. Der Leser ist nunmehr im Stande den räumlich-kompositorischen Zusammenhang zwischen Kerze und Teufel inhaltlich zu deuten. Die Vermittlerrolle spielt das Sprichwort „dem Teufel eine Kerze anzünden“, von dem auch Verbildlichungen vorliegen [Abb. 7].<sup>21</sup> Diese Redensart bezeichnet „die teuflische Verkehrung eines Gottesdienstes“.<sup>22</sup> Das Resultat des Bildleseprozesses ist ebenso aufrüttelnd und umwälzend wie das von Kap. I, 13. An seinem Endpunkt steht die Erkenntnis, dass die katholische Messe mit ihrer Transsubstantion einen Teufelskult darstellt.

Wie schon bei Kap. I, 13 lässt sich die Aussage der Bildrhetorik von I, 122 als Lutherantisches Statement verstehen. Gerade im Jahre

<sup>20</sup> Scheidig (*Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 186) hat den gewaltsamen Aspekt der Engelsfigur erkannt: „Ein mächtiger Engel [. . .] zwingt den Blick des Betenden auf den Altar hin“. Allerdings zwingt er ihn nicht nur auf den Altar, sondern vor allem auf die Transsubstantion hin.

<sup>21</sup> Röhrich, *Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten*, Bd. 5, 1615–1616 (Abb. 1 und 2).

<sup>22</sup> Röhrich, *Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten*, Bd. 5, 1616.

Von Hoffnung des ewigen lebens/  
Das CXXII. Capitel.



Abb. 5. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel I, 122.

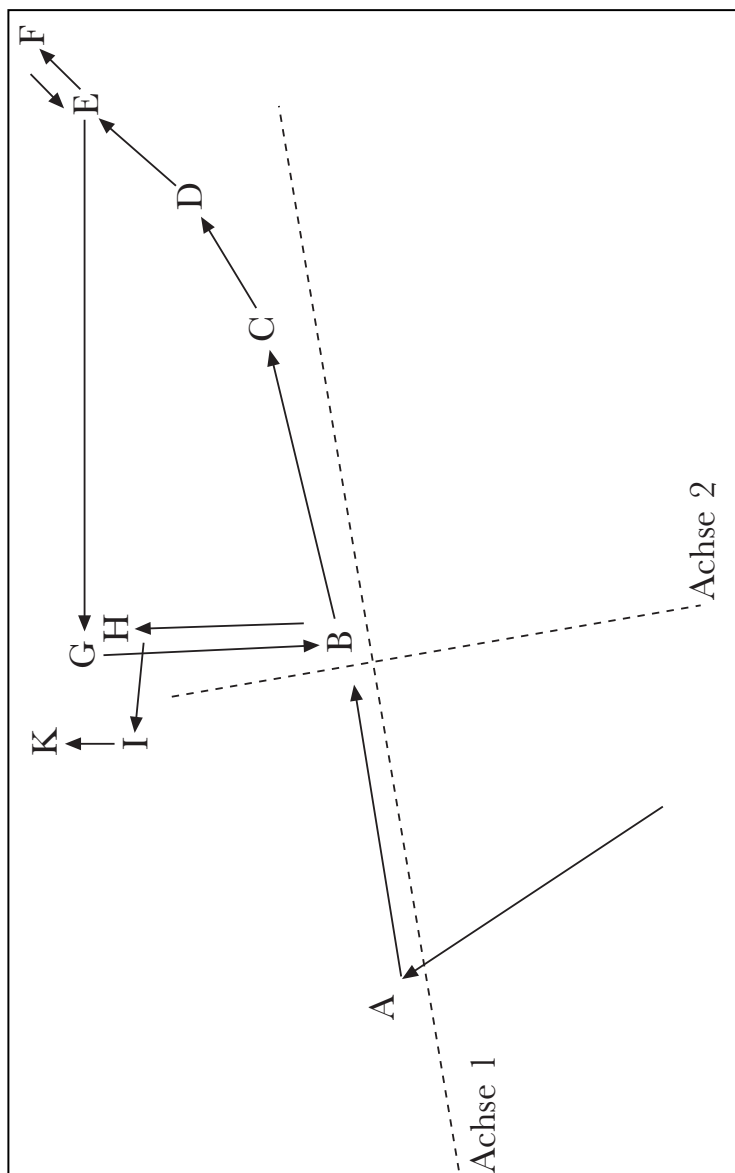


Abb. 6. Blickführungsskizze zu Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt I, 122.



Abb. 7. „Dem Teufel eine Kerze anzünden“, Röhrich, *Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten*, 1616, Abb. 2.

1520 hatte Luther das Messopfer und das Dogma der Transsubstantiation zurückgewiesen, in der Schrift *De captivitate babylonica ecclesiae praeludium*.<sup>23</sup> Wie bei Kap. I, 13 ist klar, dass Brant *nicht* für die Bild-Inventio verantwortlich gemacht werden kann. Dass die Axialkonstruktion und die Blickführung des Bildes zu Kap. I, 122 ein Lutheranisches Statement darstellt, kann mit Hilfe eines Bildvergleiches erhärtet werden: Anlässlich des Reichstags des Jahres 1518, der in Augsburg abgehalten wurde, hat der Petrarca-Meister in einem Einblattdruck die katholische Messe dargestellt, der Kaiser Maximilian I. beiwohnte [Abb. 8].<sup>24</sup> Die axiale Ausrichtung des Bildes ist im

<sup>23</sup> Vgl. Iserloh, *Geschichte und Theologie der Reformation* 38.

<sup>24</sup> Geisberg M., *Der deutsche Einblatt-Holzschnitt in der ersten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts* (München: 1930) Nr. 1524; Musper Th., *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarcameisters Ein kritisches Verzeichnis mit Einleitung und 28 Abbildungen* (München: 1927) Nr. 576; Röttinger H., *Hans Weiditz der Petrarcameister* (Strassburg: 1904) 13; Dodgson C., *Catalogue of Early German and Flemish Wood-cuts preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, Bd. 2 (London: 1911) 173.



Abb. 8. Kaiser Maximilian I. hört die katholische Messe. Einblattholzschnitt des Petrarca-Meisters.



Vergleich zu der Abbildung zu Kap. I, 122 um 90 Grad gedreht und verläuft *hierarchiekonform*. Der Blick wird vom hinteren Innenraum der Kirche in zentralperspektivischer Anordnung auf das perspektivische Zentrum, den Altar, hingeführt, an dem der Priester die Messe zelebriert. Die Heiligen auf dem Altar (Maria und Engel einer Verkündigungsgruppe) sind nicht enthauptet, sondern fungieren als gültige Andachtsbilder. Keinesfalls wird in einer Seitennische „dem Teufel eine Kerze angezündet“; alle vier Kerzen sind dem Altar mit dem Allerheiligsten und der Heiligengruppe zugeordnet. Der Einblattdruck von 1518 zeigt, wie man eine Messe regelkonform darstellen hätte müssen.

Was leistet das Bild zu Kap. I, 122 in Bezug auf die Perzeption des Textes? Das Bild operiert hier nicht nur in einem anderen Diskurs, es ist der Textargumentation regelrecht entgegengesetzt. Während man die Funktionsweise des Bildes im Fall von Kap. I, 13 noch als widerlegenden Kommentar zu einem Satz auffassen konnte, stellt es im Fall von Kap. I, 122 eine *Widerlegung des gesamten Kapitels* aus einer spezifischen, subversiven Perspektive dar. Der Petrarca-Meister transponierte den allgemeinen christlichen Gedanken sofort, unverzüglich und ausschließlich auf den Glaubenskampf. Die Frage „inwiefern darf ich auf ewiges Leben hoffen“ stellte sich ihm nicht vorrangig. Ihm erschien eine polemische Orientierung *ex negativo* weitaus wichtiger: Wer kommt nicht in den Himmel? – Die Katholiken. Sie „zündeten dem Teufel eine Kerze an“; die katholische Messe ist ein Teufelskult. Das Bild dient hier dazu, *Petrarcas Text zu zerlesen und zu destrukturieren*. Die Methodik des Petrarca-Meisters ist umso auffälliger, als die Transponierung des Textsinnes auf die katholische Messe nicht selbstverständlich ist. Im Fall von Kap. I, 13 kann man argumentieren, dass der Text einen Bildkommentar gewissermaßen „erfordert“ oder wenigstens herausgefordert habe: Für Kap. I, 122 geht dies nicht auf. Der Bild-Inventor verfolgte in Religionssachen eine eigene, vom Text völlig unterschiedliche Agenda, die ihm als solche weitaus wichtiger war, als eine mehr oder weniger kontingente Wiedergabe des Textsinnes.

Bezeichnend ist, dass der Bild-Inventor seine demaskierende Kritik auch in Kapiteln beim katholischen Klerus auslagert, welche überhaupt nicht von der christlichen Religion handeln. Ein Beispiel hierfür ist I, 92 „De gloria“ („Vom Ruhm“). Petrarcas Kapitel redet vom Ruhm des Schriftstellers, Dichters und Gelehrten. Der Petrarca-Meister bringt jedoch stattdessen den katholischen Klerus ins Bild

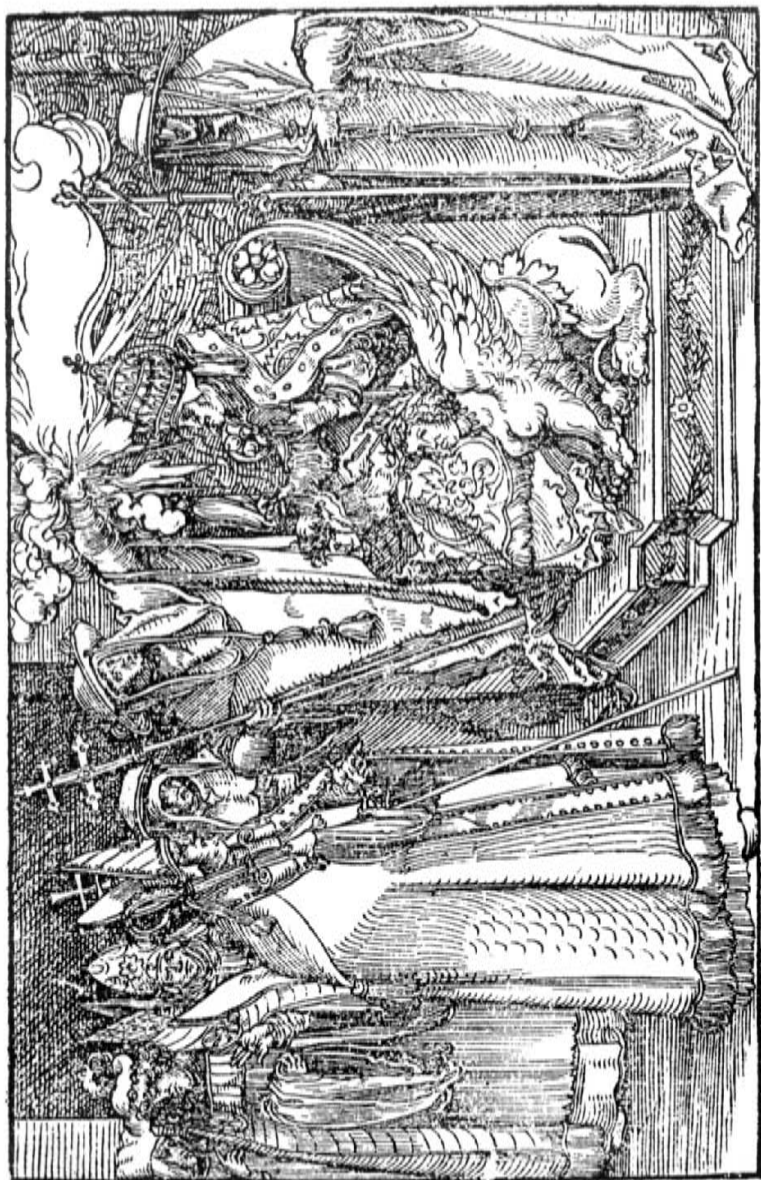


Abb. 9. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel I, 92.

[Abb. 9]: den Papst, Kardinäle, Bischöfe und Priester. Diesen demaskiert er mittels der Sphinxen am Thron des Papstes, mittels wilder Weihrauchschwaden, die einen Nebelungseffekt hervorbringen sollen, und mittels einer axialen Dekonstruktion, die die hierarchische Anordnung zersetzt. Die vordere Sphinx hat den Kopf gedreht und blickt den Betrachter zu dessen Überraschung geradewegs an. Dieser Eingriff verbucht einen aufrüttelnden, subversiven und dekonstruierenden Effekt. Wenn ein Thron heraldische Tiere aufweist, müssen diese natürlich strack nach vorne blicken. Das Fakt, dass die Sphinx den Kopf dreht, ist ein Zeichen, dass der Thron des Papstes nicht einwandfrei ist: Der Papst wird damit als dämonischer Abgott konstituiert, der von den Kardinälen beweihräuchert und verehrt wird, ähnlich wie im Bild zu Kap. I, 13 die dämonische „Klosterkatz“ vom katholischen Klerus verehrt wird [Abb. 1].

Das Bild zu Kap. I, 92 liefert keine Widerlegung der Argumentation des Textes, sondern hat mit dieser kaum etwas zu tun. Man kann ausschließen, dass Brant, dem sowohl der lateinische Text geläufig als auch die Lutheranische Negativrhetorik des Bildes fremd war, der Bild-Inventor ist. Die Bild-Inventio lässt sich hier nur so erklären, dass der Petrarca-Meister eingedeutschte Kapitelüberschriften vor sich hatte und dass ihm der Titel des Kapitels „von der eer und glorie“ schon genügte, um ihn auf die Bildidee zu bringen: „eer und glorie sind eitel“ – Wer ist eitel? – Der katholische Klerus. Da ihm diese Bildidee zündend erschien, kümmerte er sich in diesem Fall nicht weiter um den Text.

### *Subversive Lektüre durch ungewohnte Blickwinkel*

Ein Beispiel für die hohe bildgestalterische Kreativität, die der Petrarca-Meister in seiner *zersetzenden Demaskierungsrhetorik* an den Tag legte, ist Kap. I, 107 „De pontificatu“ („Vom Papsttum“). Die Textrhetorik der Ratio dämpft die Freude über das höchste Kirchenamt, indem sie die Schwere, die Arbeitslast und auf die zum Teil unangenehmen Verpflichtungen desselben herausarbeitet.

Die Bild-Inventio weist eine fast 180gradige Umkehrung in der Ausrichtung der Bildachse auf [Abb. 10]. Sie ist so angelegt, dass der Betrachter den Stuhl Petri überraschenderweise von hinten anblickt. Der Tatsache, dass zwei Kardinäle, abermals umnebelt von wilden Weihrauchschwaden, dem Papst die Tiara aufsetzen, entnimmt der Betrachter, dass offensichtlich eine Papstkrönung im Gang ist. Diese

Von dem Bapstthumb/  
Das. CVII. Capitel.



Abb. 10. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel I, 107.

Entdeckung verbucht im Zusammenhang mit der Ausrichtung der Bildachse und der Bildperspektive ‚von hinten‘ einen aufwühlenden und aufrüttelnden Effekt. Eine so wichtige Zeremonie muss natürlich *von vorne* [vgl. Abb. 11] und am liebsten mit einigem Respektabstand wiedergegeben werden. Außerdem positioniert der Petrarca-Meister den Standpunkt des Betrachters oberhalb, der somit auf den Papst respektlos herabblickt [Abb. 10]. Nun fällt dem Bildleser ein Priester auf, der kniend einen Schwur ablegt. Damit ergibt sich eine noch stärkere Inversion der normalerweise geschuldeten Reverenz: Einen Schwur legt man natürlich von vorne, niemals von hinten ab. Worauf schwört aber der Priester? Mit einem Stäbchen in der Linken zeigt er genau an, worauf er schwört: auf eine Aussparung im Holz, wo sich das Gesäß des Papstes befinden muss. Der Bildleser hat nunmehr entdeckt, dass der Priester „auf den Arsch des Papstes“ schwört.

Auch hier sind Textrhetorik und Bildrhetorik keinesfalls identisch.<sup>25</sup> Das Bild erfüllt die Aufgabe, Petrarcas stoisch-christliche Bescheidenheits- und Dämpfungsrhetorik durch eine fundamentale, radikale und zudem äußerst grob vorgetragene Lutheranische Demaskierungsrhetorik zu ersetzen. Der brüske Affront impliziert, dass die Argumente der Text-Ratio hinfällig geworden sind. Wenn man dem Papsttum abschwören muss, ist klar, dass es keinen Sinn mehr macht, sich mit der Frage auseinander zu setzen, inwiefern man sich über die Erlangung dieses Amtes freuen darf. Auch hier verbucht das Bild den Effekt, dass Petrarcas Text zerlesen und zersetzt wird. Ohnehin ist klar, dass Sebastian Brant nicht der Autor dieser Bild-Inventio gewesen sein kann.

Die Bildrhetorik des Petrarca-Meisters, bei der er ungewöhnliche Blickwinkel, Betrachterperspektiven und Bildausschnitte anwendete, wurde von Fränger, Scheidig und anderen immer wieder als Darstellungsmittel von „Schau-“ bzw. Genrebildern missverstanden, die angeblich die Aufgabe haben sollen, uns das Leben um 1520 „wertfrei“ vorzuführen. Ein Beispiel hierfür soll Kap. I, 31 „De equis“ („Von Pferden“) [Abb. 12] sein. Scheidig meint, dass der Petrarca-

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<sup>25</sup> Scheidig versucht hier zu Unrecht die Einheit von Text und Bild zu retten, indem er betont, dass Petrarca das Papsttum kritisiert habe. Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 169. Das ist jedoch irreführend: Petrarca hat in *De remedüs* keinesfalls das Papsttum als Institution kritisiert oder gar seine Legitimität bestritten.



Abb. 11. Pietro Perugino, *Der Schmerz Leos III.* Fresko, Vatikan, Stanza dell'incendio di Borgo.



Abb. 12. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel I, 31.

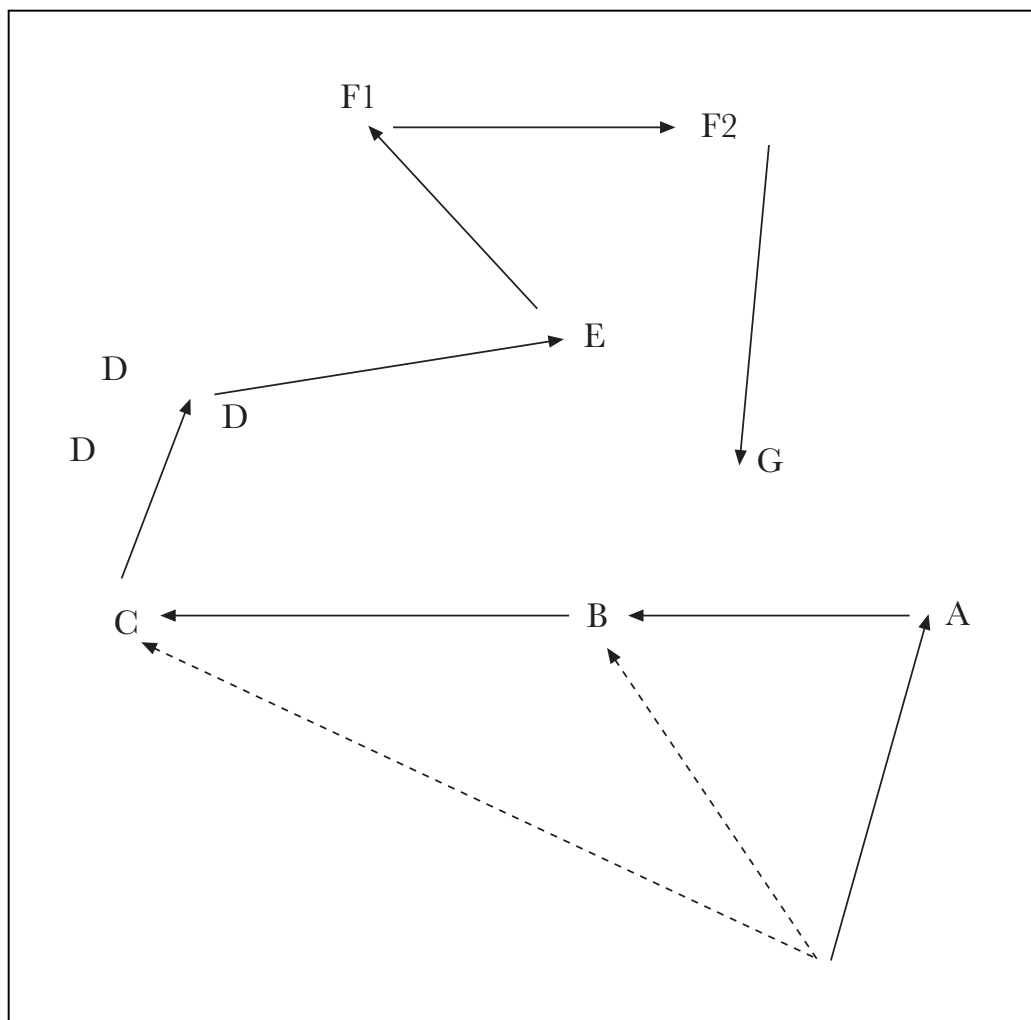


Abb. 13. Blickführungsskizze zu Holzschnitt I, 31.



Meister hier ein wertneutrales „Bild vom höfischen Leben seiner Zeit gibt“.<sup>26</sup> M.E. liegt hier jedoch sehr wohl eine Wertung vor: Der Petrarca-Meister setzt den Blick von hinten und ‚hinter die Kulissen‘ ein, um den Bildgegenstand subversiv zu demaskieren und respektlos zu entwerten. Die Freude (*Gaudium*) richtet sich hier auf das Pferd, eines der wichtigsten Statussymbole der Frühen Neuzeit. Der Gegenstand der Freude wird ins Bild gebracht, jedoch nicht im Sinn derselben: Wenn der Petrarca-Meister den Standpunkt der Freude hervorheben hätte wollen, hätte er ein rassiges Turnierpferd im vollen Lauf und im Kampf wiedergeben müssen – ein Bildkonzept, das ihm zweifellos geläufig war (Ritterbücher, Turnierbücher etc.). Stattdessen überrascht und „enttäuscht“ er den Betrachter durch den banalen Anblick der Hintern dreier stillstehender Figuren: Der Bildleser blickt auf den Rücken eines Ritters (A), eines Herolds (B) und schließlich links auf einen Pferdearsch (C).

Der merkwürdige Blickwinkel soll den Betrachter aufrütteln und einen Denkprozess in Gang setzen: Weshalb soll er das Pferd – sonst das schöne Statussymbol *par excellence* – *nicht* positiv bewerten? Die Antwort soll der Bildleser auf dem Blickweg vom Vorder- zum Mittelgrund und vom Mittel- zum Hintergrund entdecken [s. Abb. 13, Blickführungsskizze zu I, 31]: Zunächst einmal erblickt er die stillstehenden Pferde in und vor der Koppel links, die gepflegt werden (D). Dieser Tatsache entnimmt er, dass die Pferdehaltung eine mühselige Angelegenheit ist. Dann wandert der Blick zum Mittelgrund: Dort sind zwei Pferde zu erkennen, die von zwei Reitern in einfacher Kleidung (ohne Waffenrüstung) trainiert werden (E). Diese Erkenntnis verstärkt die gerade gemachte Schlussfolgerung. Erst die Hintergrunddarstellung vermittelt jedoch die Lösung der Gedankensuche: Der Bildleser erblickt fünf wilde Pferde im Wald (F 1) und rechts von diesen ein grobes und überdimensioniertes Pferd am Waldesrand (F 2). Bei dem letzten handelt es sich nicht, wie Scheidig meinte, um die Wiedergabe einer antiken Pferdestatue, die der Text suggeriert habe.<sup>27</sup> Das Pferd hat nichts von einem stolzen antiken Ross, sondern korrespondiert mit den wilden Waldpferden links. Es

<sup>26</sup> Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 77.

<sup>27</sup> Ebd. 78: „Das steife, unlebendige Pferd rechts im Hintergrund geht auf Petrarcas Text zurück, der von Denkmälern spricht, die Herrscher des Altertums ihren Lieblingspferden errichtet haben“.

ist schlecht proportioniert und klobig. Das ist nicht darauf zurückzuführen, dass der Petrarca-Meister kein wohlproportioniertes, rassiges Pferd zeichnen hätte können. Man vergleiche dazu nur die Rösser in den Bildern zu Kap. II, 70 [Abb. 14] oder zu Kap. I, 1 [Abb. 15]. Die Klobigkeit und Übelproportioniertheit des Pferdes im Hintergrund von I, 31 erfüllt eine distinkte Funktion: Sie soll augenfällig vorführen, dass das Pferd eigentlich ein wildes und ekliges Waldmonster ist.

Was ergibt sich daraus? Der Betrachter legt jetzt den Blickweg zurück, vom Hintergrund zum Vordergrund, ab. Dabei registriert er, dass sich das Pferd am Waldesrand in Parallelstellung zu dem Turnierpferd im Vordergrund (G) befindet. Die Parallelstellung suggeriert zwei Schlussfolgerungen: Erstens eine Bestätigung der gerade gezogenen, zweitens dass die Zähmung des Pferdes ein ganz schwieriges Unterfangen ist.

Was leistet das Bild hier in Bezug auf die Textrezeption? Einerseits bereitet es den Leser gedanklich auf die stoische Demaskierungsrede der Ratio vor. In diesem Fall präludiert es durch die Bildgeschichte, *die im Text nicht erzählt wird*, eine negative Eigenschaft des Pferdes, welche die Text-Ratio bemängeln wird: die gefährliche Wildheit des Pferdes, die jederzeit zum Abwurf des Reiters führen kann: „Nullum animal insolentius domino suo est“ („Kein Tier verträgt weniger seinen Herrn als das Pferd“).<sup>28</sup> Petrarca, der ein geübter Reiter war, war dieses Argument aus seiner eigenen Erfahrung geläufig: Durch einen Sturz vom Pferd hatte er sich eine langwierige Beinwunde zugezogen, die ihn an den Rand des Todes gebracht hatte. Die Text-Ratio führt allerdings eine *cumulatio* übler Eigenschaften des Pferdes vor, wobei entscheidend ist, dass diese in Gegensatzpaaren präsentiert werden: Ruhelosigkeit/ Mangel an Ausdauer; Aggressivität/ Niedergeschlagenheit; Wildheit/ Faulheit; Waghalsigkeit/ Schreckhaftigkeit; grundlose Panik/ Ungehorsamkeit, ja Bissigkeit und anderwärtige Aggressivität gegen den Herrn (Ausschlagen).<sup>29</sup> Daraus ergibt sich als wesentliches Argument der Text-Ratio der unstete und launische

<sup>28</sup> Bas. I, 39.

<sup>29</sup> „Animal et oei impatiens et laboris, illo tumidum, hoc deiectum, nunc impetuosum animal, nunc ignavum, nunc audax, nunc trepidum, nunc volatile, nunc caducum, hinc culicum metuens atque umbrarum, hinc dominum suum spernens diversisque illum viis in discrimen trahens. Quis contumaciam, quis morsus aut calces explicet? Quis hinnitus?“.



Abb. 14. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel II, 70.



Abb. 15. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel I, 1.

Charakter des Pferdes, der sein Verhalten unvorhersehbar macht, jederzeit zu gefährlichen Situationen führen kann und zudem das Tier pauschal diskreditiert. Die Bildrhetorik fokussiert demgegenüber auf nur eine der im Text genannten negativen Eigenschaften. Was nicht zum Ausdruck kommt, ist der widersprüchliche und unstete Charakter des Pferdes, der allerdings das Hauptargument der Text-Ratio darstellt.

### *Diskurswechsel: Auslagerungsverfahren*

Andererseits muss man feststellen, dass der Petrarca-Meister auch hier – wie schon bei den Bild-Inventionen zu Kap. I, 13, I, 122 und I, 107 – ein *Auslagerungsverfahren* anwendet, das die stoische Meditation der Affektbekämpfung blockiert. Für Petrarcas Text ist wesentlich, dass er beim Leser eine innerliche Arbeit zustande bringt, die ihn vom Zustand der Emotionsbestimmtheit in den Zustand der Ratio-bestimmtheit überführt. Voraussetzung für das Funktionieren dieser Textwirkung ist, dass der Leser die beschriebenen Befindlichkeiten und Gedanken auf sich beziehen kann. Petrarca hat das Kapitel für alle tatsächlichen und potentiellen Pferdebesitzer geschrieben, einschließlich der Kleriker, Bürger, Gelehrten usw. Der Petrarca-Meister hat die Freude des Pferdebesitzes jedoch auf die Ritter beschränkt. Damit gibt er zu verstehen, dass es sich hier um eine Sache der Ritter handelt. Diese Sozialkonkretisierung ist zudem keinesfalls wertneutral. Denn der Petrarca-Meister hat die Ritter immer wieder als Negativfiguren, als Träger verwerflichen Verhaltens, angeprangert. Als bildlichen Aufreizer verwendet er dabei oft den langen Federnbusch, der bis auf den Hintern herabhängt [Abb. 12]. Die Ritter sind für ihn die „Anderen“, die „Feinde“. Diese Tendenz lässt sich anhand zahlreicher Bild-Inventionen belegen, am augenfälligsten vielleicht anhand einer Fehlinterpretation. In Kap. II, 32 handelt Petrarca „von den Feinden“: Die Text-Ratio versucht den Schmerz, der einem aus ständiger Anfeindung und Belagerung erwächst, zu bekämpfen. Der Petrarca-Meister hat jedoch statt einer Fehde, eines Duells oder eines militärischen Angriffs (der Text bietet als *exempla* von Feinden den punischen General Hannibal und König Pyrrhus an) einen ordinären *Raubüberfall* ins Bild gebracht [Abb. 16]. Es ist bezeichnend, dass der böse Räuber ein Ritter ist, der seinem Opfer, einem ahnungslosen Patrizier, den Geldbeutel abnimmt. Aus der Bild-Inventio von



Abb. 16. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel II, 32.

Kap. II, 32 geht hervor, dass der Petrarca-Meister in einer losen, nicht von Petrarcas Text bestimmten Assoziation die Ritter mit den Feinden schlechthin identifiziert hat. Als Publikum dachte sich der Petrarca-Meister die Städter, denen er in zahlreichen Bildern die Ritter gegenüberstellt. Der Bereich, in dem die *per definitionem* bösen Ritter – sie sind Diebe, Räuber und Mörder – walten, ist der Wald. Der Wald – bedrohlich und antizivilisatorisch – wimmelt nur so von Raubrittern [Abb. 17]. Im Bild zu II, 61 tummeln sich nicht weniger als 15 Raubritter und Spießgesellen. Wenn die Städter den sicheren Zivilisationsbereich der ummauerten Stadt verlassen, sind sie höchsten Gefahren ausgesetzt. Sie werden ausgeraubt, bedroht und entführt, wie das Bild zu Kap. II, 61 zeigt [Abb. 17].

Zurück zu Kap. I, 31: Setzt seine Bild-Inventio eine genaue Lektüre des Textes voraus? Wohl kaum. Es scheint, dass der Bild-Inventor die ersten Zeilen überflogen hat, in denen bereits die Wildheit des Pferdes – der Hauptgedanke der Bild-Inventio – hervortritt.

Es wird immer wieder behauptet, dass die Illustration von *De remediis* ein unerhört schwieriges Unterfangen gewesen sei, weil es sich um einen philosophischen Text handle, der kaum oder nur zu (nebensächlichen) Teilaspekten Bildangebote mache.<sup>30</sup> Ich kann mich dieser Ansicht nicht anschließen. Sie trifft nur für eine kleinere Anzahl von Kapiteln zu, in welchen abstrakte Topics verhandelt werden, nicht jedoch für die große Mehrheit, welche Gegenstände der sinnlich wahrnehmbaren Welt diskutiert. Kap. I, 31 ist eines der vielen Beispiele, die zeigen, dass der Text Petrarcas reichlich Bildangebote macht. Schon die Gegensatzpaare und ihre Elaborationen wimmeln nur so von Bildangeboten: ein Pferd, welches aufsteigt, seinen Reiter abwirft, scheut, in Panik gerät, weigert, ausschlägt, beisst usw. Hinzu tritt eine Reihe visualisierbarer Exempel: der Grabhügel, den Alexander für sein Pferd Iskander errichtete; die Pferdestatue, die Caesar vor dem Tempel der Venus Genetrix aufstellte; der Grabhügel, den Kaiser Augustus für sein Pferd anlegte; die goldene Pferdestatue, die Antoninus Verus auf dem Vatikanischen Hügel errichten ließ usw. Es ist bezeichnend, dass der Petrarca-Meister von keinem dieser Bildangebote des Textes Gebrauch macht.

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<sup>30</sup> Z.B. Raupp, *Die Illustrationen zu Francesco Petrarca* 67: „Die Möglichkeiten, sinnbildliche Motive direkt aus dem Text Petrarcas zu schöpfen, waren gering“.

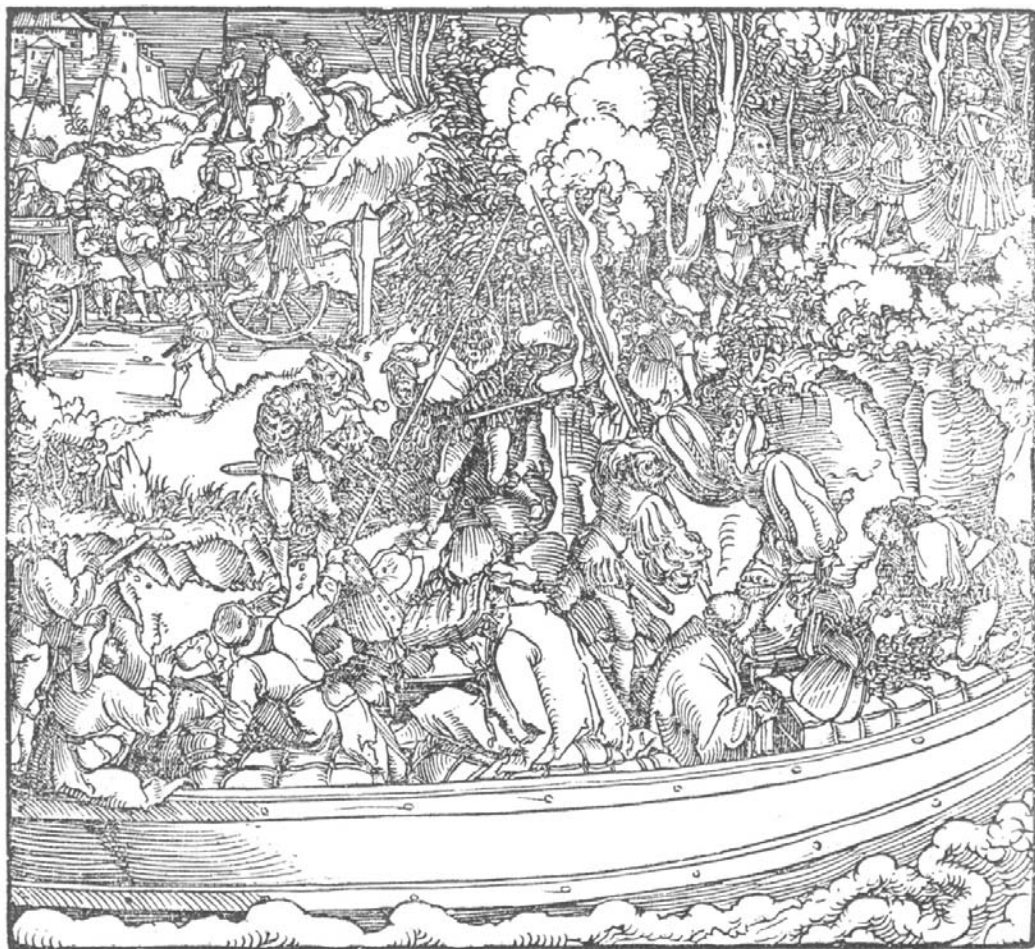


Abb. 17. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel II, 61.



Daraus muss man schließen, dass er bei der Erstellung seiner Bild-Inventionen prinzipiell nicht so vorgeht, dass er zuerst einmal den Text gründlich auf eventuelle Bildangebote hin durchforstet. Die Methode der Verbildlichung lässt sich somit nicht als möglichst kontingente Übertragung der textuellen Bildangebote in Bilder beschreiben. Offensichtlich zielen die Inventionen vielfach darauf ab, den Text durch eine andere, im Text selbst nicht enthaltene oder vorgesehene Bildersprache zu begleiten. Diese Bildersprache weist eine weitgehende Eigengesetzlichkeit auf und ist auf eine Weise konstruiert, die sich nicht einfach aus der Text-Rhetorik erklären lässt. Die Effekte, die die Bildrhetorik bewirkt, sind auch nicht mit denjenigen der Text-Rhetorik identisch.

*Übertragung von De remediis in den deutschen Sprichwortdiskurs*

Das zeigt sich auch an folgendem, wichtigen Darstellungsmittel der Bildrhetorik des Petrarca-Meisters: Er griff häufig, statt auf die Bildangebote des Textes einzugehen, zur Darstellung deutscher Sprichwörter.<sup>31</sup> Dabei ist bemerkenswert, dass diese Sprichwörter in der deutschen Übersetzung von *De remediis* eben *nicht vorhanden* sind. Die Transponierung des Textes in Sprichwörter brachte bedeutende Vorteile mit sich. Ein wesentlicher Vorteil war zunächst ihre *Lesbarkeit*. Wie im Fall der „Klosterkatze“ sichtbar wurde [Abb. 1], sind sie auch als *Blickfänger* hervorragend geeignet. Ihre Erkennbarkeit bringt mit sich, dass sie das Potential besitzen, auf direkte Weise einen Denkprozess in Gang zu setzen. Sie sind ein mächtiges rhetorisches Mittel der Lesersteuerung, insofern sie einen Sachverhalt in das Korsett einer allgemein bekannten und akzeptierten Betrachtungsweise zwingen, der sich der Rezipient kaum entziehen kann. Der zwingende Charakter des Sprichworts formatiert und strukturiert den Gedankengang des Lesers. Daraus folgt wieder eine Vielzahl von Möglichkeiten der Text-Bild-Kombinatorik. Das Sprichwort kann so angelegt sein, dass es die Text-Argumentation präludiert; es kann jedoch auch die Text-Argumentation in einen anderen Diskurs übertragen, der von dieser weit wegführt, wie dies etwa im Bild zu Kap. I, 122 („dem Teufel

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<sup>31</sup> Z.B. I, 11; 13; 44; 94; II, 1; 8; 27; 35; 36; 40; 104; 107.

eine Kerze anzünden“ [Abb. 5]) erkennbar war. Daneben gibt es verschiedene Zwischenstadien, die eine komplexe Gedankenführung zum Text hin und von diesem weg ermöglichen.

Ein aufschlussreiches Beispiel für die *Transponierung in den Sprichwortdiskurs* ist Kap. I, 11 („De virtutis opinione“, „Von der Meinung der Tugend“). Die Text-Ratio bekämpft darin die Freude, die man empfindet, wenn andere von einem eine gute Meinung haben, z.B. das Volk, die Mitbürger und die Nachbarn. Die Argumentation des Textes fokussiert hier auf eine massive Verinnerlichungsrhetorik: Was zählt, ist das Innenleben, aller äußerer Schein ist hinfällig.

Blickfänger des Bildes ist zunächst das Haupt der zentralen Figur (A) [Abb. 18; Blickführungsskizze zu I, 11]. Dort wird das Sprichwort des ‚Hälmleinstreichens‘<sup>32</sup> verbildlicht (A und B). Das Sprichwort wird so gedacht, dass man jemandem ein süßes (mit Honig bestrichenes) Hälmchen durch den Mund zieht, was besagt, dass man jemandem schmeichelt oder in betrügerischer Absicht schöne Hoffnungen macht. Der Bildleser erkennt dieses Sprichwort sofort, es ist für ihn ohne weiteres lesbar, ja er kann sich ihm nicht entziehen. Das Sprichwort formatiert das Denken des Betrachters in einer klar vorgebildeten Weise. Es transportiert zugleich eine Wertung und eine Handlungsdirektive. Diese fordert, dass man nicht auf Schmeicheleien hören soll. Die Handlungsdirektive als solche verträgt sich mit der Verinnerlichungsrhetorik des Textes.

Interessant ist, dass sich der Petrarca-Meister in seiner Bild-Inventio nicht mit *einem* Sprichwort begnügt hat, sondern zwei weitere Sprichwörter ins Bild bringt, das ‚Federnklauben‘ und das ‚Faltenstreichen‘,<sup>33</sup> welche beide durch die gebückte Figur links dargestellt werden (C1 und C2). Der Petrarca-Meister feuert auf den Betrachter also eine massive Sprichwortladung ab, woraus man schließen darf, dass er der Verlagerung in den Sprichwortdiskurs besonderes Gewicht zumaß. Da das ‚Federnklauben‘ und das ‚Faltenstreichen‘ wertlose Scheindienste bezeichnen, welche ein Niedriger einem Höhergestellten gegenüber in schmeichlerischer und betrügerischer Absicht verrichtet, ergeben sie einen ähnlichen Sinn wie das ‚Hälmleinstreichen‘. Man kann also vermuten, dass die drei Sprichwörter die Aufgabe

<sup>32</sup> Röhrich, *Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten* 631–633 s.v. „Halm, Hälmlein“.

<sup>33</sup> Röhrich, *Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten* 425–426 s.v. „Federlesen“.



Abb. 18. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel I, 11.

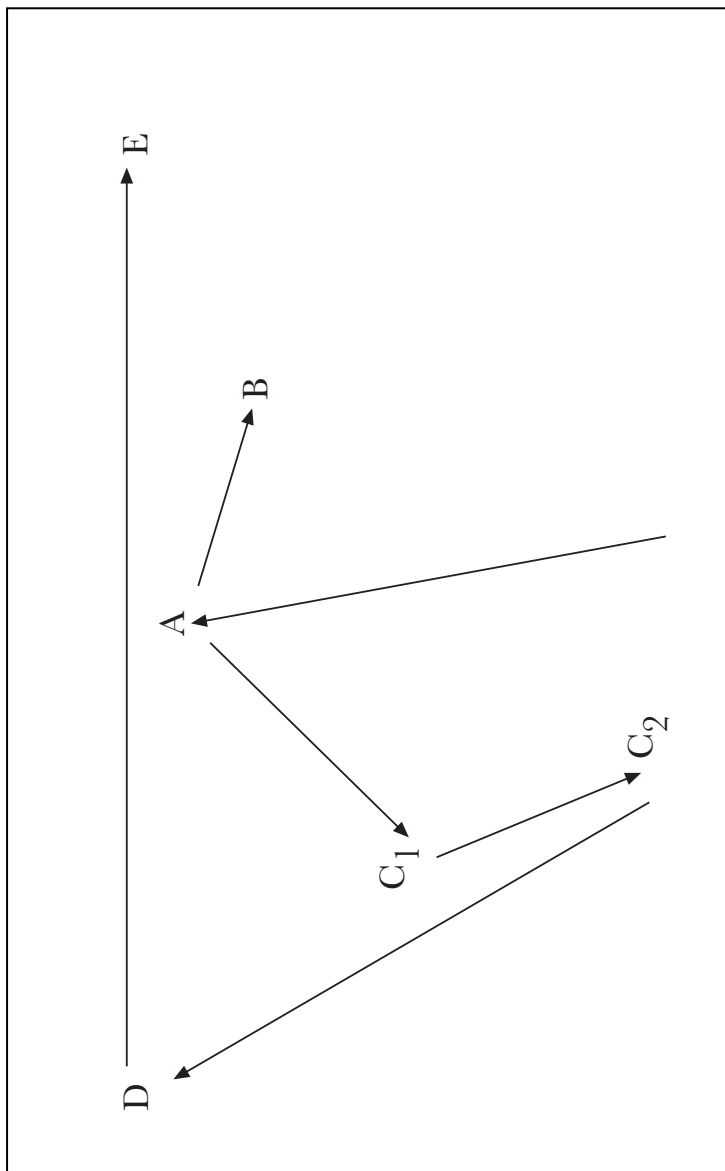


Abb. 19. Blickführungsskizze zu Holzschnitt I, 11.

erfüllen, den Leser auf leicht erkennbare Weise auf die Verinnerlichungsrhetorik der Text-Ratio vorzubereiten.

Jedoch ist der Gedankengang, den die Bildrhetorik beim Leser ankurbeln will, damit noch nicht zu Ende gedacht. Es liegen weitere Bildinformationen vor, die miteinbezogen werden müssen. Der frühneuzeitliche Leser erkennt mühelos die sozialen Kategorien, welche der Petrarca-Meister den Sprichwortfiguren zuordnet: Derjenige, der sich schmeicheln lässt, ist ein Patrizier, die Schmeichler sind Ritter. Diese Erkenntnis verbucht beim Betrachter einen überraschenden, aufrüttelnden Effekt. Denn der Sprichwortkontext impliziert, dass sozial niedrigerstehende Personen höhergestellten schmeicheln. Der Betrachter muss jetzt entdecken, was die merkwürdige Umkehrung auf sich hat. Weshalb umgarnen die Ritter den Patrizier? Die Bildrhetorik ist abermals so eingerichtet, dass der Bildleser die Antwort im Hintergrund entdecken soll [Abb. 19, Blickführungsskizze zu I, 11]. Links kommt der reiche, hohe und makellose Stadtpalast des Patriziers ins Bild (D), rechts der verfallene, rissige Turm des Ritters (E). – Da sie verarmt sind, wollen die Ritter also am Reichtum des Patriziers teilhaben! Der geschilderte Sachverhalt hat einen klar erkennbaren Sitz in der historischen Realität, in der der Petrarca-Meister operierte. In seiner Heimatstadt Augsburg hatten die Patrizier rezent einen spektakulären Vermögenszuwachs erfahren; einerseits wurden sie vom Adel umworben, andererseits strebten sie selbst danach, in den Adel aufgenommen zu werden. Kaufmannsgeschlechter wie die Fugger zählten den Kaiser zu ihren Schuldnern, und wurden von diesem in den Adel (Reichsgrafenstand) aufgenommen.<sup>34</sup>

Was bewirkt die Bildrhetorik mit ihrer sozialen Aufrüstung der Sprichwörter bei den Rezipienten? Sie leitet die Textrezeption in die Richtung eines *Speculum morale* um, in dem Sitten- und Zeitkritik geübt wird. Die Kritik der Ratio am Verhalten des Affekts wird als *Kritik am Verhalten der Ritter (und Patrizier)* gemünzt. Dieser Rezeptionseffekt des Bildes lässt sich belegen. In der zweiten Auflage (1539) erhielten die illustrierten Kapitel neue, explizitierende Textbeigaben. Kapitel

<sup>34</sup> Vgl. Zorn W., „Gesellschaftsgeschichte 1518–1650“, in *Welt im Umbruch. Augsburg zwischen Renaissance und Barock* (Augsburg: 1980) I, 72–73; Haemmerle A., *Die Hochzeitsbücher der Augsburger Bürgerstube und Kaufleutestube bis zum Ende der Reichsfreiheit* (München: 1936); Herr F., „Augsburger Bürgertum im Aufstieg Augsburgs zur Weltstadt (1275–1530)“, in *Augusta 955–1955* 107–136; Pölnitz G. Freiherr von, „Augsburger Kaufleute und Bankherren der Renaissance“, ebd. 198–218.

I, 11 erhielt die neue Aufschrift: „Von Federklaubern, hälmleinstreichen und schmarotzern“. Die neue Aufschrift teilt dem Leser also mit, dass sich das Kapitel gegen Schmeichler und Schmarotzer richtet. Der für die stoische Textrhetorik erforderliche Verinnerlichungsdiskurs wird durch die Bildrhetorik nach außen hin, nämlich in eine Kritik des Verhaltens des Ritterstandes, umgeleitet. Dieser Prozess der Verbildlichung lässt sich häufig dingfest machen: Die Bilder konstituieren Petrarca immer wieder als Autor eines *Speculum morale*.

### De remediis in den Narrenschiffdiskurs

Die Umleitung der Bildrhetorik in den Diskurs der Sitten- und Zeitkritik des *Speculum morale* wird durch Interimaginalität mit einem vielgelesenen *Speculum morale* erhärtet, Sebastian Brants *Narrenschiff*. Das Hälmleinstreichen tritt in einem Bild des *Narrenschiffes* hervor (z.B. Nr. 33) [Abb. 20]. Es ist auch dort Zielscheibe der Sittenkritik: Wer sich das Hälmlein streichen lässt, ist ein Narr. Die grotesken Übertreibungen, die den Narren kennzeichnen, sind auch im Bild des Petrarca-Meisters zu Kap. I, 11 vorhanden: Die riesigen Federn, die der Ritter klaubt, der überdimensionale Rosenkranz in den Händen des Patriziers. Für die Textrezeption folgt daraus, dass dem Leser von *De remediis* das Leseangebot des Narrenspiegels gemacht wird. Diese Lesesteuerung der Bilder lässt sich in Bezug auf eine größere Anzahl von Kapiteln dingfest machen. Ein Beispiel, in dem diese Rhetorik schon aus der Interimaginalität erhellt, ist Kap. II, 107 („De ira“, „Vom Zorn“) [Abb. 21]. Der Jähzornige ist ein Narr. Er „reitet den Esel“, in dem er „ihm auf die Ohren rutscht“. Man vergleiche hiermit Brant, *Narrenschiff*, Nr. 35 („Von leichtem Zürnen“) [Abb. 22]:

Wer stets im Esel hat die Sporen,  
der rückt ihm oft bis an die Ohren.

Der Narr den Esel allzeit reitet,  
der wegen nichts und nichts sich streitet  
und um sich knurret wie ein Hund,  
kein freundlich Wort geht aus sei'm Mund [. . .]  
Der Weise tut gemach allzeit,  
der Jähe auf dem Esel reit.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Sebastian Brant, *Das Narrenschiff*, ed. E. Pradel (Leipzig: 1986, 2. Aufl.) 108–109.



Abb. 20. Sebastian Brant, *Narrenschiff*, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel Nr. 33.

In den Holzschnitten zu Brants *Narrenschiff* werden die Narren in der Mehrzahl der Fälle durch die Narrenkappe mit langen Ohren und Schelle klipp und klar sichtbar gemacht [vgl. Abb. 21 und 22]. Es ist bemerkenswert, dass der Petrarca-Meister, obwohl *De remediis* im Gegensatz zum *Narrenschiff* von der Aufmachung her nicht als Fastnachtsbuch präsentiert wird [vgl. Titelseite Abb. 23 und 24], ebenfalls zu diesem Darstellungsmittel gegriffen hat. Man sehe hierfür beispielsweise die Bilder zu Kap. II, 40 „Von einem ungelertenn lernmayster“ [Abb. 25], II, 71 „Von einem nerrischen und unbedechtigen mit Amptman“ [Abb. 26], II, 103 „Von dem verlust der zungen und der sprach“ und II, 104 „Von dem gebruch und mangel der tugent“ [Abb. 27]. Der „unbedechtige mit Amptman“ („De stulto et temerario collega“) wird vom Petrarca-Meister als Ritter konkretisiert, dem die langen Ohren mit Schellen unter dem Federnbusch hervorwachsen [Abb. 26]. Die langen Ohren mit Schellen kommentieren die Unvorsichtigkeit, mit der er sich in einen aussichtslosen Kampf (Hintergrundszene) stürzen will. Der Narr, dem Tugendhaftigkeit abgeht, verfolgt mit einer Peitsche die (Personifikation der) Tugend, die auf dem dornigen Weg (der Tugend) unbeeindruckt zu Gott schreitet [Abb. 27]. Das Bild zu II, 40 [Abb. 25] stellt Interimaginalität und Intertextualität gleich zu dem ersten Bild des *Narrenschiffs* (Nr. 1 „Von unnützen Büchern“) her [Abb. 28]:

Im Narrentanz voran ich geh,  
denn ich viel Bücher um mich seh,  
die ich nit les und nit versteh.<sup>36</sup>

Bildkonstruktionen wie die von Kap. II, 40, II, 71, II, 103 und 104 bewirken, dass die Diskursivität von *De remediis* mit dem Narrenspiegel-Diskurs verfließt. Die Bilder konstituieren Petrarca, den Verfasser eines stoischen Meditationshandbuchs, in Fällen wie den genannten als Narrenspiegel-Autor, als Autor eines Volksbuchs.

Dieses Rezeptionsangebot mag auf den ersten Blick abwegig erscheinen. Es liegt jedoch nicht nur theoretisch die Möglichkeit vor, den Standpunkt des Affektes mit dem des a-philosophischen Dummen, des stoischen *stultus*, somit des Narren zu identifizieren, und die Rede der Text-Ratio mit Brants ätzender Widerlegungsrede der jeweiligen Kapitel. Dergestalt kann sogar der Weise zum Narren werden. Ein

<sup>36</sup> Brant, *Das Narrenschiff* 28.



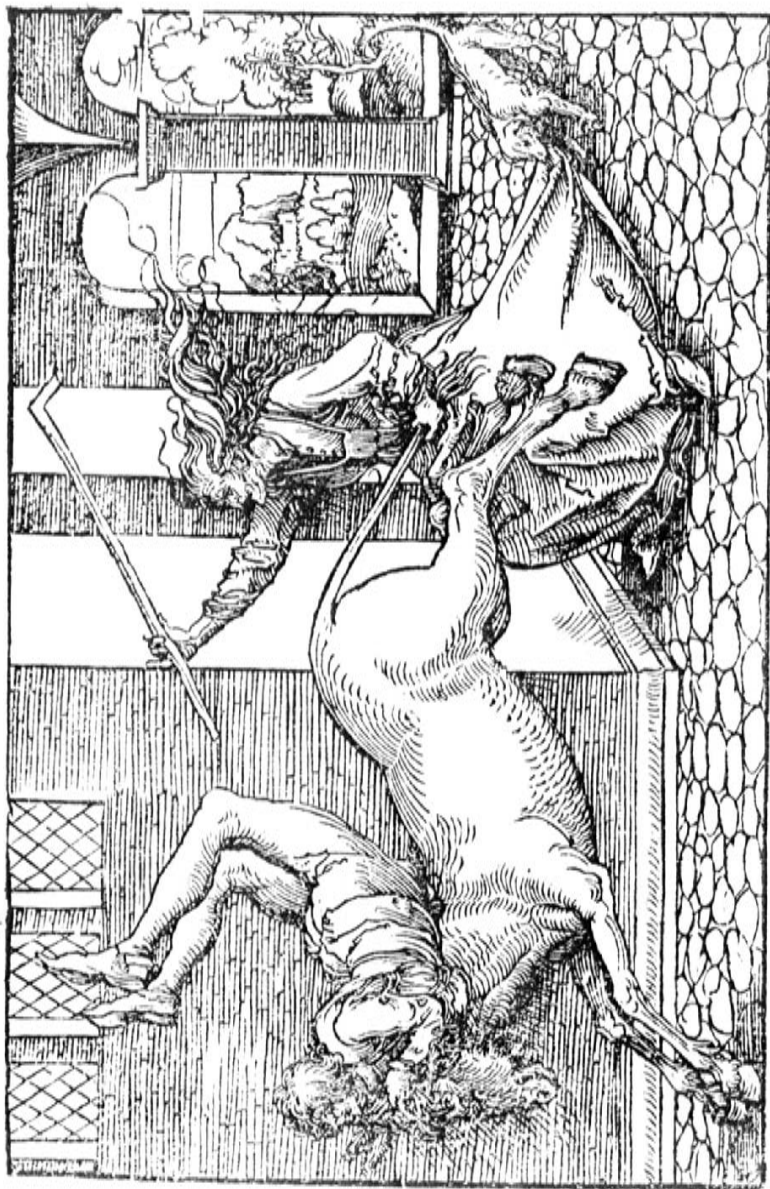


Abb. 21. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel II, 107.



Abb. 22. Sebastian Brant, *Narrenschiff*, Holzschnitt zu Nr. 35.



Mit Königlichem May. Gnade und privilegio. Gedruckt zu Augspurg durch Heynrich Steyner.

M. D. XXXII.

Abb. 23. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt auf der Titelseite.



Abb. 24. Sebastian Brant, *Narrenschiff*, Titelseite.

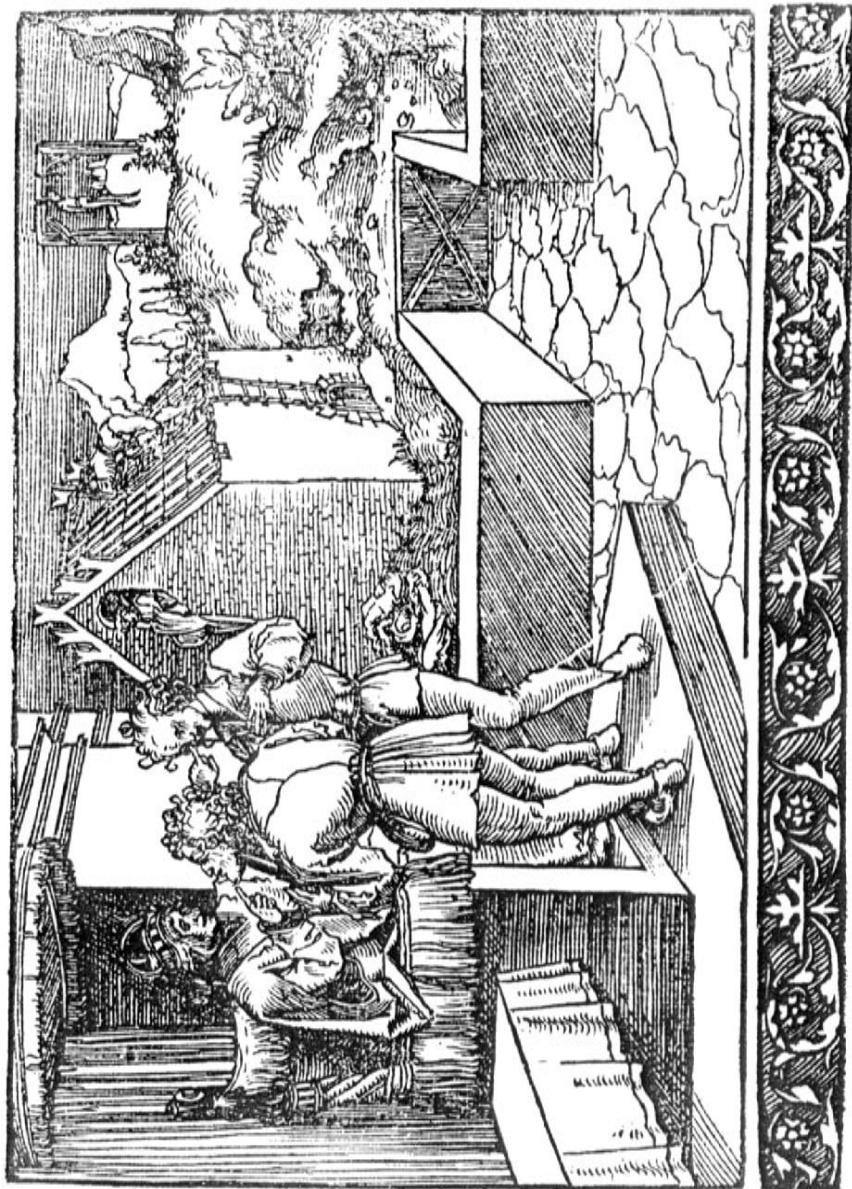


Abb. 25. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel II, 40.



Von einem nerzischen vnd vnbe-  
dehtigen mit Amtman/Das LXXI. Capitel.



Abb. 26. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel II, 71.



Abb. 27. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel II, 104.



Abb. 28. Sebastian Brant, *Narrenschiff*, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel Nr. 1 („Von unnützen Büchern“).



Beispiel hierfür ist der Weise König Salomon, der sich von einer Gespielin zum Abgottdienst verführen ließ. In der Bild-Inventio braucht der Petrarca-Meister dem König keine Ohren und Schellen aufzusetzen: Der Tatbestand selbst, dass er vor dem Abgott kniet, führt genug des Narrenhaften vor [Abb. 2]. Es gibt noch andere Bildmittel, die die Rezeption in den Narrendiskurs überführen. Ein solches Mittel ist die Reduplizierung des Geschehens durch Affen. In Kap. I, 26 demaskiert das Bild die Freude am Brett- und Schachspiel als närrisches Betragen. Zu diesem Zweck zeigt es hinter den zwei Spielerpaaren ein Paar Affen, das Mühle spielt [Abb. 29].

Insgesamt gilt, dass die Narrenrede demaskiert, indem sie närrisches Betragen durch Narrenkappe, lange Ohren mit Schellen oder andere groteske Bildmittel grell markiert. Sowohl im Narrenschiff als auch in den Bildern des Petrarca-Meisters werden unter närrischem Verhalten zumeist ganz normale, menschlich-allzumenschliche Verfehlungen verstanden: Habsucht, Vermessenheit, Völlerei, Ehebruch, Verachtung, Spott, Rechthaberei, Leichtsinn, Wollust, Neid, Hass, Jagdlust, Spielsucht, Verachtung der Armut, Überhebung, Hoffart usw. In Petrarcas Text werden diese und andere Negative dem Zustand der Emotionsbedingtheit zugeschrieben. In diesem Sinn finden sich in *De remediis* Kapitel über Neid (II, 35), Verachtung (II, 36), Hoffart (II, 111), Unkeuschheit und Ehebruch (II, 110), Völlerei (II, 108), Neid (II, 106), Geiz (II, 105) etc.

Die Implikationen für die Rezeption, die sich aus der Übertragung in den Narrendiskurs ergeben, lassen sich gut anhand von Kap. II, 36 „Von Verachtung“ („De contemptu“) zeigen. Petrarcas Text redet von der Verachtung, die dem Weisen zuteil wird: „Nil crebrius quam contemni sapientem ab insanis“ („Nichts kommt häufiger vor, als dass der Weise von den Dummen verachtet wird“). Als Exempel nennt die Text-Ratio die größten antiken Schriftsteller (Homer, Vergil, Cicero) und den mächtigsten antiken Herrscher (Kaiser Augustus). Der argumentative Effekt ist erstens die Einsicht, dass niemand vor Verachtung sicher ist, nicht einmal die größten Geister und die mächtigsten Herrscher, zweitens, dass Verachtung ein Phänomen ist, das mit Realitätsverlust zusammenhängt. Die Verächter konkretisiert Petrarca als Literaturkritiker und politische Feinde: Zoilus kritisierte Homer, Euangelus Vergil, Calvus Cicero und Marcus Antonius überzog Augustus (damals noch Octavian) mit gehässigen Bemerkungen. Die Waffen der Verächter sind bei Petrarca Worte. Keiner dieser Kritiker konnte sich jedoch in Bezug auf seine literarischen (oder

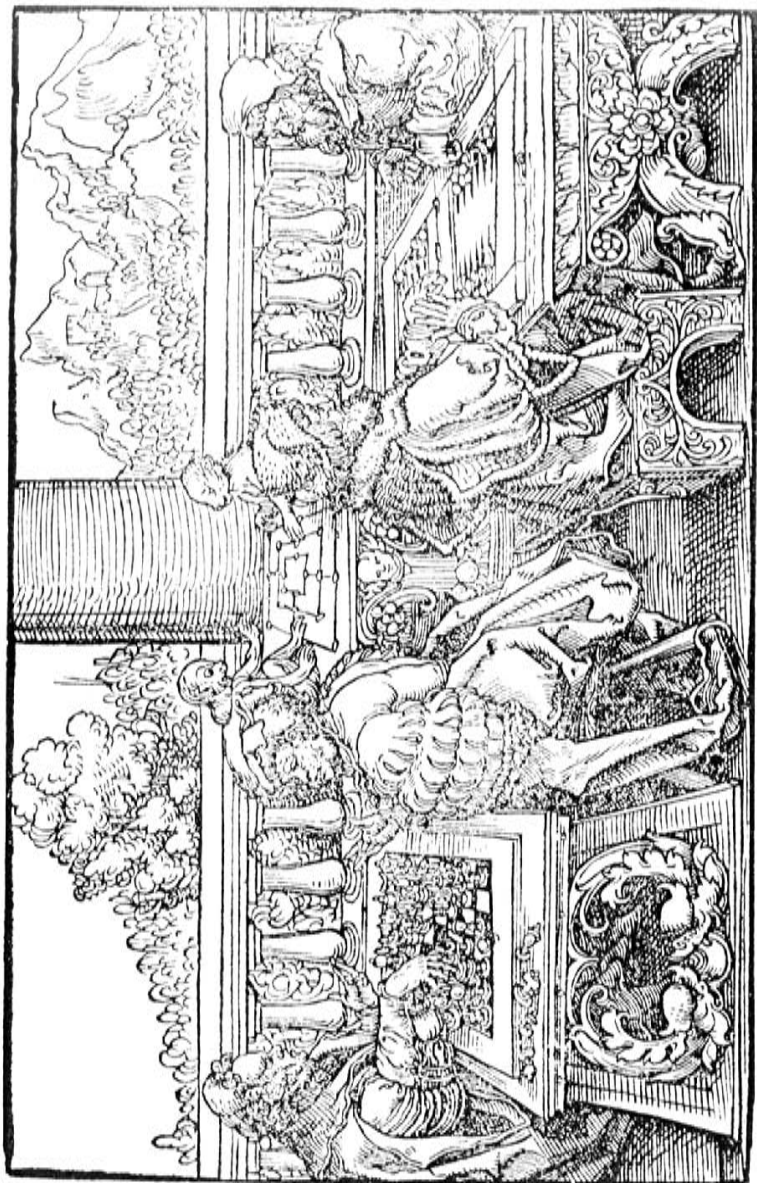


Abb. 29. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel I, 26.

politischen) Leistungen mit dem Objekt seiner Kritik messen. Die Argumentation zielt darauf ab, den Schmerz, der einem aus der Kritik erwächst, zurückzudrängen oder am besten zu beseitigen.

Der Petrarca-Meister redet in seiner Bild-Inventio statt von literarischer, intellektueller oder politischer von *sozialer* Verachtung, die sich in dem Bewerfen mit Steinen äußert [Abb. 30]. Die Person, der diese handgreifliche Verachtung zuteil wird, ist kein Weiser, Dichter oder Politiker, sondern ein Bauer, der eine Dorfgasse hinaufgeht. Die Leute, die ihm die Sozialentwertung des Steinwurfs angedeihen lassen, sind ebenfalls Bauern, drei ihrer Zahl. Da der Leser in diesem Bild die Interimaginalität mit Sebastian Brants Narrenschiff erkannte – Nr. 42 „Von Spottvögeln“ [Abb. 31] und Nr. 105 „Verhinderung des Guten“, ordnete er das Bild zu Kap. II, 36 dem Narrendiskurs zu. In dem Bild zu *Narrenschiff* Nr. 42 bewerfen ebenfalls genau drei Narren einen Mann, der wegläuft, mit Steinen. In der Gedichtüberschrift fasst Brant den Sinn des Kapitels und der Abbildung zusammen: „Es sind die Narren zu entbehren,/ die stets mit Steinen werfen gern,/ wollen nicht Schelt und Weisheit hören“.<sup>37</sup>

Man mag einwenden, dass die drei Spottvögel des Petrarca-Meisters keine Narrenkappe tragen. Inwiefern ist der Leser im Stande, sie dennoch als Narren zu identifizieren? Der Petrarca-Meister kennzeichnet sie sofort durch den Gesichtsausdruck des Bauern-Narren vorne in der Mitte, der als Blickfänger dient: besinnungslose Wut. Weiter dadurch, dass er die Verächter nachdrücklich derselben sozialen Kategorie wie die des Verachteten zuordnet. Wer seinesgleichen verachtet, ist ein Narr. Wenn der Betrachter die Kleider vergleicht, erkennt er zudem, dass die des Verachteten weitaus besser sind: Sie sind ordentlich, während die Kleider der Verächter zerschissen sind. Wer, selbst in Fetzen gekleidet, einen ordentlich gekleideten Mann verachtet, ist ein Narr.

Welche Textrezeption ergibt sich in Kap. II, 36 durch die Übertragung in den Narrendiskurs? Der Leser wird darauf vorbereitet, Petrarcas Text als *Speculum morale* aufzufassen, in welchem verwerfliches Verhalten angeprangert wird, in diesem Fall das Verachten von Mitmenschen. Das Bild liefert eine demaskierende Negativbewertung dieses Verhaltens und lehrt den Leser: 1. Verachtung zeigen ist tölpelhaft und dumm. 2. Verachtung ist ungerecht. 3. Vermeide dieses

<sup>37</sup> Brant, *Das Narrenschiff* 124.



Abb. 30. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel II, 36.



Abb. 31. Sebastian Brant, *Narrenschiff*, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel Nr. 42 („Von Spottvögeln“).

Betragen! Die *Speculum-Morale*-Lektüre lenkt von der Rezeption von *De remediis* als stoisches Meditationsbuch zur Affektbekämpfung ab, da der Denkprozess statt auf die innerliche Verarbeitung negativen Verhaltens anderer auf die äußere Kritik des Verhaltens selbst umgeleitet wird.

*Transformation von De remediis in ein praktisches Weltbemeisterungsbuch  
und die Emotionalisierung des Betrachters*

Durch die Verbildlichung von Sprichwörtern, die in Petrarcas Text nicht vorhanden sind, bewirkt die Bildrhetorik noch weitere Effekte. Z.B. kann sie Ratschläge erteilen, die in die Richtung *praktischer Weltbemeisterung* gehen. Ein Beispiel dafür ist Kap. II, 27 („Von untreuen Freunden“; „De amicis infidelibus“). Petrarcas Text-Ratio fokussiert auf das Innenleben: Sie stellt Argumente zusammen, mit denen man die Enttäuschung und den Seelenschmerz über den Treuebruch von Freunden verhindern oder überwinden kann.

Die Bildrhetorik führt zwei parallele Figurengruppen vor [Abb. 32]. In der Figurengruppe links ist das (u.a. von Luther verwendete) Sprichwort „Das sind böse Katzen, die vorne lecken und hinten kratzen“, rechts der sprichwörtliche Ausdruck „einen Dolchstoß versetzen“ dargestellt.<sup>38</sup> Beide Sprichwörter vermitteln die Direktive, dass man sich vor falschen, hinterhältigen Leuten hüten soll.<sup>39</sup> Wer dies unterlässt, erleidet schweren Schaden oder sogar den Tod. Diese Direktive ist mit der Textrhetorik nicht identisch, sondern richtet sich statt auf innerliche Verarbeitung des Treuebruchs auf praktische Weltbemeisterung.

Diese Diskursverlagerung wird durch weitere Details der Bildkonstruktion unterstrichen. Die Figurengruppe rechts wird sozial konkretisiert. Der Bösewicht, der den heimtückischen Dolchstoß versetzt, ist ein Ritter, das Opfer ein Patrizier und Kaufmann.<sup>40</sup> Die soziale

<sup>38</sup> Röhrich, *Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten* 824, s.v. „Katze“ und 323–324, s.v. „Dolch“.

<sup>39</sup> Ebd.

<sup>40</sup> Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 221, identifiziert den Mann, der vom Ritter erdolcht wird, nicht überzeugend als „Gelehrten“. Es handelt sich um einen Kaufmann und Patrizier; vgl. das Bild zu Kap. II, 56, das einen reichen Kaufmann in seinem Kontor zeigt.

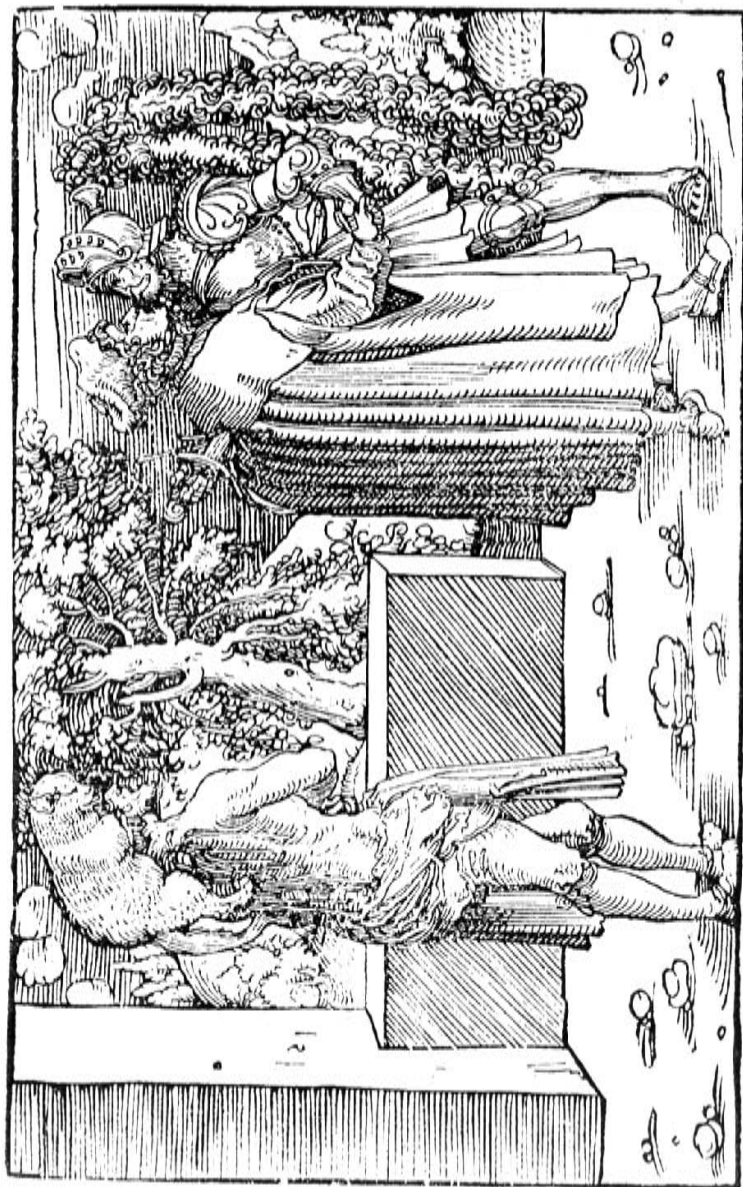


Abb. 32. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel II, 27.

Konkretisierung bewirkt eine Konkretisierung der Weltbemeisterungsdirektive: „Seht euch vor den Rittern vor! Sie tun nach außen hin schön, aber hinterrücks erdolchen sie euch“.

Wie wirkt sich das Bild auf die Textrezeption aus? An erster Stelle macht es freilich ein Leseangebot, das von der stoischen Affektbekämpfung wegführt. Andererseits bringt es den Topic des falschen Freundes ins Bild, der im Text (wenngleich auf andere Weise) verhandelt werden wird. Das Bild bewirkt hier durch seine krasse Körperlichkeit (nackter, blutender Rücken), das gezeigte Blutverbrechen (Mord) und seine soziale Aktualisierung eine Emotionalisierung des Betrachters. Man kann vermuten, dass dieser Umstand den Bildbetrachter besonders empfänglich für die Ratschläge der Text-Ratio macht: Der Schmerz des nackten, blutenden Rückens schreit sozusagen um Heilung (*remedium*). Er bewirkt, dass der Leser die Ratschläge der Text-Ratio begierig in sich aufsaugen wird. In dieser Beziehung kann das Bild die Funktion der psychologischen Einstimmung des Lesers auf die Textlektüre erfüllen.

Freilich ist nicht ohne weiteres klar, inwiefern das Letzte als absichtsvolle Strategie des Bild-Inventors zu deuten ist. Jedenfalls lässt sich eine Reihe von Beispielen beibringen, in denen der Bild-Inventor den Topic, der im Text verhandelt wird, in einer krassen und emotionalisierenden Weise verbildlicht hat. In Kap. II, 1, das von der Hässlichkeit des Leibes handelt, bringt der Petrarca-Meister zum Schrecken des Lesers statt eines hässlichen Menschen ein Monster ohne Kopf, dessen Augen gruselig aus den Schultern herausblicken [Abb. 33]. Kap. II, 7 („Von Dienstbarkeit“) führt er eine Auspeitschungsszene vor, bei der ein Diener, an einem Pfahl gefesselt und mit entblößtem Rücken, von seinem Herren gezeißelt wird [Abb. 34]. In Kap. II, 8 bringt er die Armut in ihrer krassesten Form ins Bild, nämlich konkretisiert als obdachlose Bettler, Krüppel und Aussätzige [Abb. 40], während der Text unter „paupertas“ etwas ganz anderes versteht. Gleiches gilt für das Bild zu Kap. II, 10, das anstatt eines asketischen Wohlhabenden einen armen Schlucker in Fetzen zeigt, der auf einem zerschlissenen Tischtuch inadäquate Nahrung zu sich nimmt. Zu Kap. II, 28, wo der Text von Undankbarkeit handelt, zeigt der Petrarca-Meister den erzwungenen Selbstmord Senecas. Seneca hat sich gerade in einem Bottich die Venen aufgeschnitten, aus denen das Blut in hohem Bogen herausspritzt. Der Auftraggeber des Selbstmordes, Kaiser Nero, steht daneben und beobachtet mit Interesse, wie das Blut emporspritzt [Abb. 35]. Es ist



# Uon häfligkeit des leybs/ Das Erst Capitel.



Abb. 33. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel II, 1.

Von Dienſtparkeyt / Das  
Syßendt Capitel.

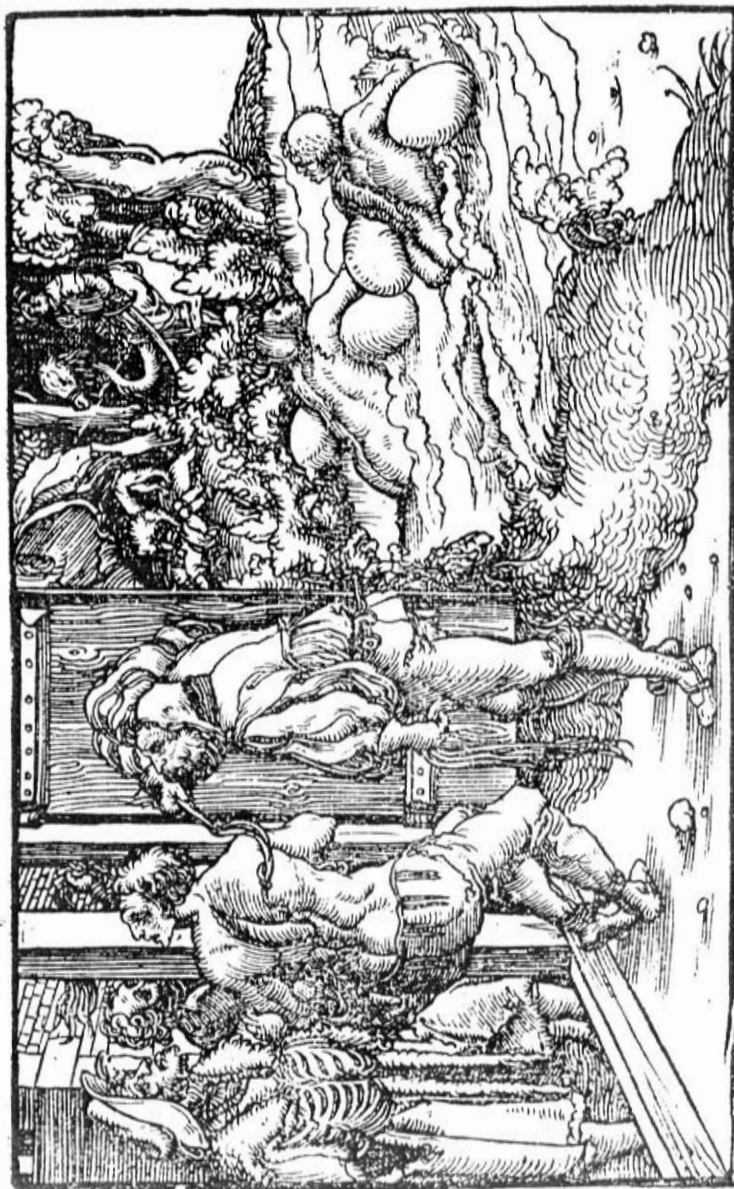


Abb. 34. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel II, 7.

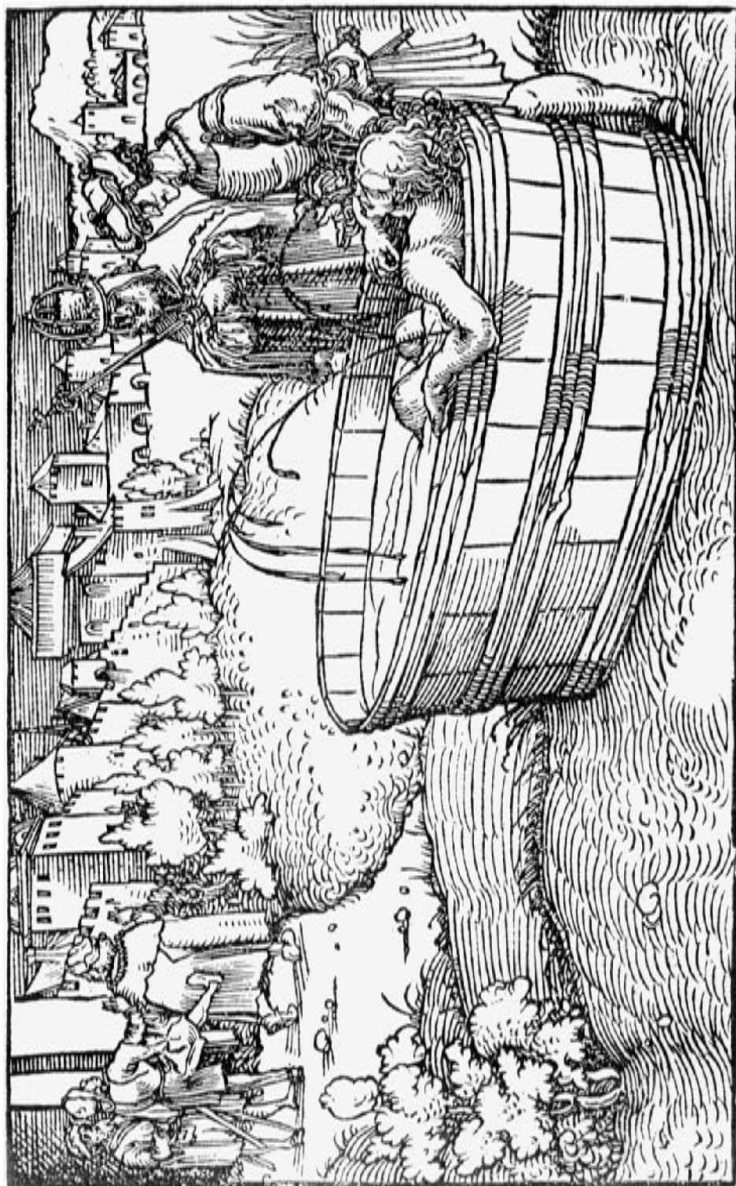


Abb. 35. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel II, 28.

bezeichnend, dass das Exempel Seneca-Nero in Petrarcas Text nicht vorhanden ist. Kapitel I, 29, in dem sich die Text-Ratio ganz im Sinn Petrarcas über den Verdruss und die kleinen Ärgernisse beklagt, die einem die Diener bereiten, verbildlicht der Petrarca-Meister gleich mit drei höchst gewalttätigen Szenen, von denen im Text *nicht* die Rede ist: 1. Ein gefesselter Diener, dem sein Herr die Zunge herausschneidet (links). 2. a. Die Auspeitschung eines Dieners mit entblößtem Hintern (rechts). b. Messerstich durch die Wade des Herren. 3. Die Geißelung Christi [Abb. 36]. Während der Text von Kap. II, 43 von einem strengen Vater handelt, zeigt der Petrarca-Meister im Bild einen doppelten Kindesmord [Abb. 37]. Die Reihe dieser krassen, emotionalisierenden Bild-Inventionen, die sich nicht ohne weiteres auf den Text stützen, ließe sich lange fortsetzen.

Die Kumulation der krassen, emotionalisierenden Bild-Inventionen weist darauf hin, dass der Petrarca-Meister bei seinen Verbildlichungen jedenfalls mit einer gewissen Präselektion vorgegangen ist. Eine Emotionalisierung des Lesers war sicher vorgesehen. Allerdings ist fraglich, in welche Richtung sie wirken sollte. M.E. handelte es sich dabei nicht immer nur um die Prozedur, durch die Bildgestaltung den Status der Affektbestimmtheit bzw. des Schmerzes möglichst heftig zu gestalten, um den Leser zur Textlektüre der Trost- und Heilmittel zu überreden.

Bezeichnend hierfür ist das gerade angeführte Beispiel Kap. II, 29. Das Bild korrespondiert hier gar nicht mit der Argumentation des Textes, der auf die negativen Begleiterscheinungen fokussiert, welche die Haltung von Dienern mit sich bringt. Sogar die Ratio stimmt hier mit der Klage des Dolor überein: Sie sagt, dass der Dolor Recht hat, wenn er meint, „von Dienern belagert zu werden“. Die Dienerschaft setzt sich „nicht aus Helfern, sondern aus Feinden“ zusammen.<sup>41</sup> Weiter stimmt die Ratio völlig den negativen Qualifikationen zu, welche Dolor den Dienern zukennt. Diener sind *per definitionem* Lügner, Vielfrasse, Diebe und unsittliche Leute. Der Ratschlag, den die Ratio hier gibt, bezieht sich ausnahmsweise nicht auf die innerliche Arbeit. Er besagt ganz einfach, dass man möglichst keine Diener halten, bzw. dass man ihre Anzahl jedenfalls

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<sup>41</sup> „Nunc recte ais ‚obsideo‘. Olim tibi circumfultus videbare, sed obsessus eras, non familiari solum exercitu, sed hostili“.



Abb. 36. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel II, 29.



Abb. 37. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel II, 43.

drastisch reduzieren sollte.<sup>42</sup> In diesem Fall betragt sich Petrarcas Text ausnahmsweise als Weltbemeisterungs- oder Hausbuch.

Die Bild-Inventio zeigt hier jedoch keineswegs die Widerwrtigkeit und Ekelhaftigkeit der Diener, sondern im Gegenteil die Grausamkeit der Herren [Abb. 36]. Nicht die Diener belagern die Herren, sondern die Herren die Diener! Blickfnger ist die Figurengruppe links vorne, genauer die Zunge, die ein Herr seinem an eine Sule gefesselten, wehrlosen Diener mit einem Messer herausschneidet [A; s. Abb. 39, Blickfhrungsskizze zu II, 29]. Es mag ja sein, dass der Diener zuvor gelogen hat. Jedem christlichen Bildleser musste jedoch eine so krasse Bestrafung uerordentlich grausam erscheinen, umso mehr, da es der Herr selbst ist, der die Zunge herausschneidet. Die Bildrhetorik wirkt in die Richtung dieser Interpretation: Die Hintergrundszene, zu der der Blick des Betrachters nunmehr wandert (B; nicht zufllig befindet sich das Haupt der zentralen Figur dieser Szene in etwa auf derselben Hhe mit der herausgeschnittenen Zunge), bietet die richtige Bewertung an. Sie stellt nicht, wie Scheidig angibt, die Auspeitschung eines beliebigen Knechtes dar,<sup>43</sup> sondern die Geielung Christi: Christus wird, seiner Kleider entblt und an einer Sule gefesselt, von zwei Henkersknechten ausgepeitscht. Fr eine hnliche Verbildlichung der Geielung Christi als Hintergrundszene vergleiche man Piero della Francescas Gemlde *La flagellazione di Cristo* [Abb. 38].<sup>44</sup> Auch dort steht Christus an einer Sule, whrend er von zwei Henkersknechten ausgepeitscht wird. Die Aussage, die der Bildleser nunmehr entdeckt, ist: Wer seinen Diener auf eine so grausame Weise foltert, tut nichts anderes als die Henkersknechte Christi. Daraus ergibt sich eine klare Verurteilung nicht des Verhaltens der Diener, sondern des Herren! Diese Aussage wird durch die Figurengruppe rechts besttigt, zu der sich das Auge nunmehr hinbewegt. Man sieht einen Herrn, der seinen Diener auf grausamste Weise auspeitscht (C [Rute], D [nackter Hintern], E

<sup>42</sup> Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 223, hat hier den Text missverstanden, wenn er „Petrarcas Lehre“ wie folgt zusammenfasst: „Man soll mit den Knechten freundlich, glimpflich und gtig umgehen [. . .].“ Es handelt sich um ein Seneca-Zitat, dem Petrarca nicht zustimmt. („Nota sunt tamen hac in re Senecae consilia: Vivendum cum servis familiariter, comiter, clementer, familiarem esse iubet. At quibus? Nempe his, quorum familiaritas contemptus est genetrix [. . .]“).

<sup>43</sup> Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 223.

<sup>44</sup> Ginzburg C., *Erkundungen ber Piero* (Berlin: 1981) 133–192.

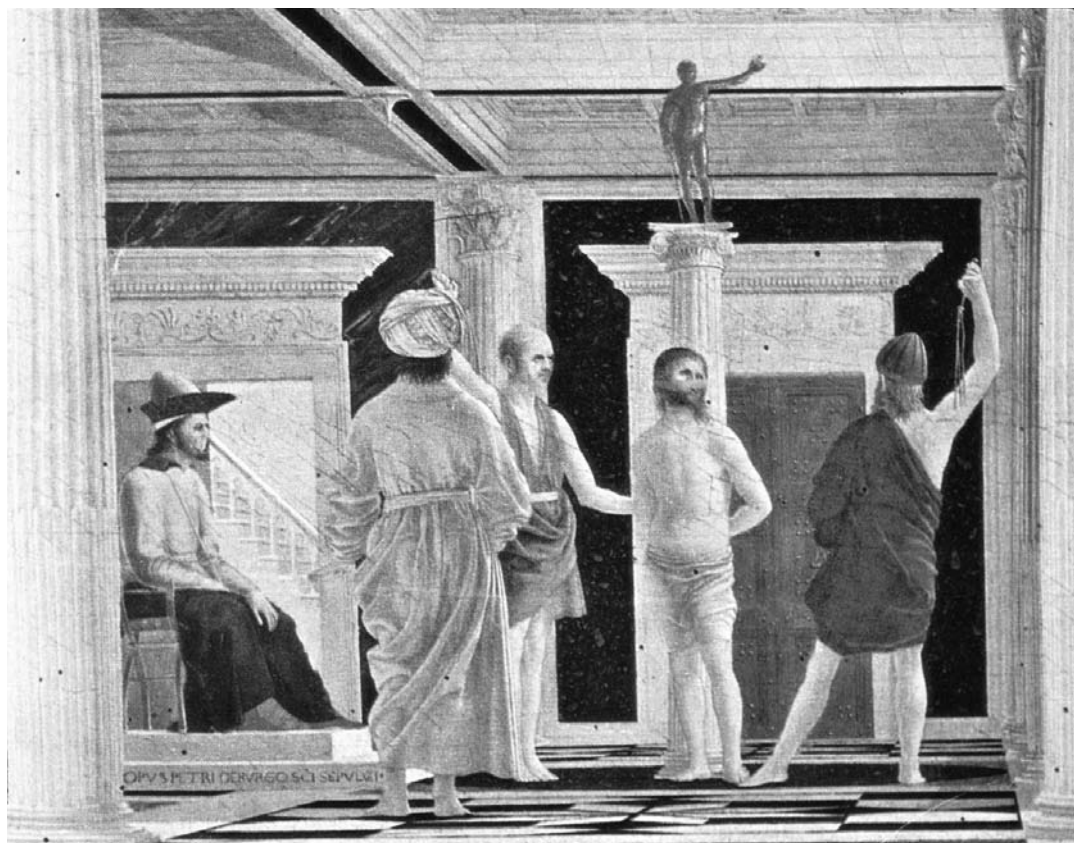


Abb. 38. Piero della Francesca, *La flagellazione di Cristo*. Urbino, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche.



[abgeschlagene Rutenzweige]). Wie sehr der Herr wütet, macht der Petrarca-Meister dadurch sichtbar, dass der Rutenbesen, mit dem gepeitscht wird, schon ganz in Stücke geschlagen ist: Rundherum liegen lose Zweige auf dem Boden [Abb. 36]. Ein Herr, der seinen Diener so auspeitscht, tut dasselbe wie die Henkersknechte Christi.

Die Emotionalisierung des Betrachters hat hier die Aufgabe, bei diesem eine religiöse *meditatio* in Gang zu setzen, die zu Einkehr, Mitleid und Milde führt. Wer sich an seinem Diener (an seinem Mitmenschen) vergreift, versündigt sich an Christus. Christus wohnt in unseren Mitmenschen. Wenn du Christus ehren willst, darfst du deinen Mitmenschen nicht verletzen! Die Emotionalisierung funktioniert hier also in der Erkenntnis-Machina eines *religiösen Meditationsbildes*.

Es ist hier jedoch noch ein weiteres Bildelement zu entdecken, welches zu einer Überlagerung der Funktion des religiösen Meditationsbilds führt: Nachdem der Blick des Betrachters von der Geißelung Christi zu dem Rutenbündel gewandert ist und von dort auf den nackten Hintern des Dieners, auf den die Schläge herabprasseln, entdeckt er (auf derselben Höhe) zu seinem Entsetzen, dass der Diener seinem Herren ein Messer durch die Wade sticht! Das Messer, das rechts aus der Wade herausragt und mit Blutspritzern untermalt wird, bildet somit den Endpunkt der Blickführung (F) [Abb. 39, Blickführungsskizze zu II, 29]. Somit funktioniert das religiöse Meditationsbild zugleich als *weltliches Warnbild* im *Speculum-morale*-Diskurs. Es vermittelt die Aussage: Wenn ihr die Diener so grausam behandelt, werden sie sich auf furchtbare Weise rächen! Diese Aussage wird durch das Mittel der Wiederholung eines Bildelements unterstrichen: Der Bildleser erkennt in dem Messer das Messer, mit dem die Blickwanderung angefangen hat – das Messer, mit welchem dem Diener links die Zunge abgeschnitten wird. Der Bildleser erkennt darin die Warnung, dass Gleiches mit Gleichem vergolten werden könnte.

Da die Bildrhetorik im Fall von Kap. II, 29 der Textargumentation entgegengesetzt ist, kann man ausschließen, dass die Bild-Inventio auf Sebastian Brant zurückgeht.

*Das zweite Buch von De remediis:  
verstärkte diskursive Erweiterungen*

Insgesamt gestaltet sich meiner Meinung des Text-Bild-Verhältnis des zweiten Buches anders als das des ersten, insofern die Verbindungslinien

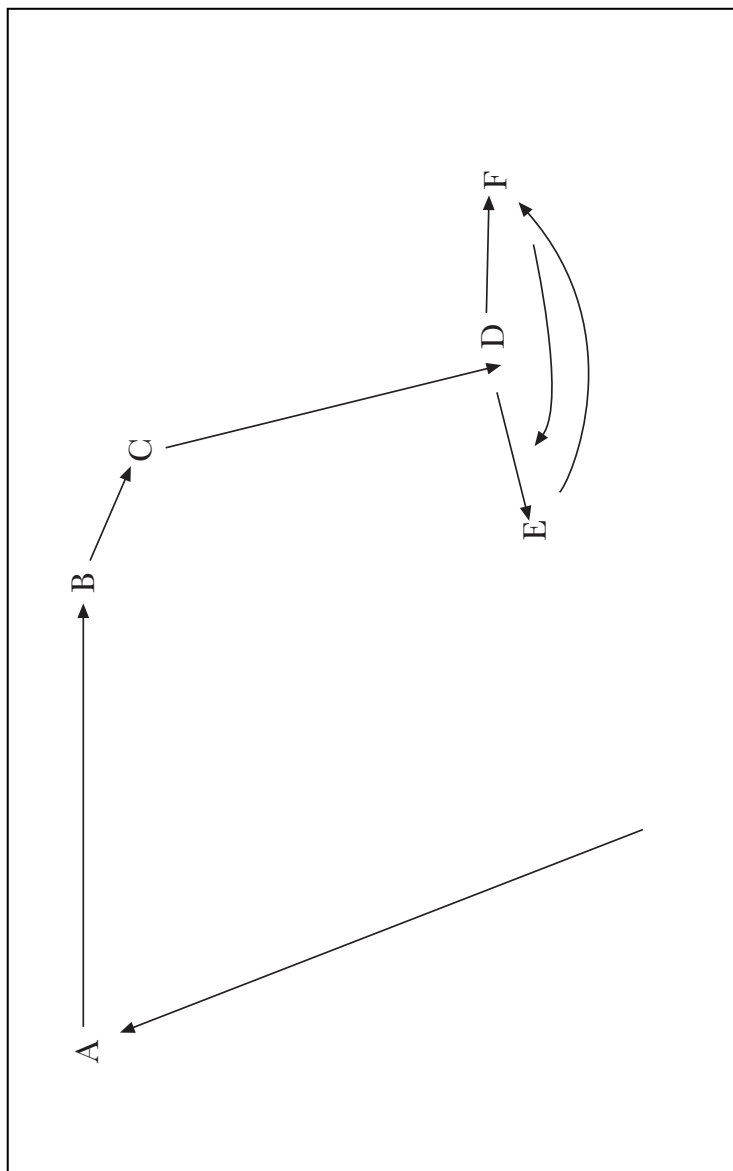


Abb. 39. Blickführungsskizze zu Holzschnitt II, 29.

zwischen Bild und Text oft viel loser sind, als dies im ersten Buch der Fall ist. Das ist, glaube ich, darauf zurückzuführen, dass der Petrarca-Meister im Fall des zweiten Buches keine deutsche Übersetzung vor sich hatte, auf die er im Bedarfsfall zurückgreifen konnte. Dieser Umstand führte im Verein mit den diskursiven Erweiterungen, wie sie bisher sichtbar wurden, manchmal zu Bild-Inventionen, die einer sinngemäßen Rezeption von Petrarcas stoisch-christlichem Meditationstext regelrecht entgegenwirken. Kap. II, 29 und II, 43 sind keine Einzelbeispiele.

In Kap. II, 8 („Von Armut“, „De paupertate“) bietet die Text-Ratio eine Reihe von stoisch-christlichen Trostargumenten im Fall mangelnden Reichtums an. Unter anderen zählt sie eine Reihe von Vorteilen auf: dass man automatisch zur Mäßigung (*modestia*) hingeführt werde, dass man vor Dieben, Räubern, Nachstellungen, Verlusten sowie der Angst vor Verlusten geschützt sei, dass man nicht zum Hochmut (*superbia*) verführt werde, dass man vor Neid (*invidia*) geschützt sei, dass einem Krankheiten wie Übelkeit (*nausea*) und Podagra erspart bleiben u.s.w. Die Argumentation der Text-Ratio gipfelt in dem stoischen Paradox, dass Armut eigentlich Reichtum bedeute bzw. dass nur der Weise reich sei („solus sapiens dives“). Das gesamte Kapitel geht davon aus, dass unter „Armut“ nicht die blanke, entsetzliche Armut zu verstehen sei, die Obdachlosigkeit, Hunger und Invalidität mit sich bringt. Wie die Einwürfe der Emotion Dolor mehrfach zeigen, besitzt die „Armut“ ein Haus. Der „Arme“ ist dabei jeweils als Wohlhabender gedacht, dem Luxus und Reichtum abhanden gekommen sind.

Das Bild [Abb. 40] bringt jedoch gerade die extremste Form der Armut ins Bild, in Gestalt von Bettlern, Landstreichern, Obdachlosen und Krüppeln. Blickfänger ist die obdachlose Bettlerin in der Bildmitte, die schwanger ist und an der Hand einen Esel mit sich führt, auf dem in Körben drei Kleinkinder sitzen (A, A1 [Esel], A2 [Kinder]; Abb. 41 Blickführungsskizze zu II, 8). Links vor ihr steht ein Krüppel mit Holzfuß und Krücken, der deprimiert den Blick gesenkt hält (B). Vor ihm sitzt eine Bettlerin am Boden, die ein Kind im Arm hält (C). Sodann wandert der Blick nochmals die Bettler entlang und gelangt zu dem Bettler rechts, der an die Türe eines Stadtpalastes klopft und um Almosen bittet (D). Wie die großen Schwären auf seinem Kopf zeigen, handelt es sich um den Ärmsten der Armen, um einen Aussätzigen. Der Bildleser registriert, dass die „Türe geschlossen“ bleibt (E), obwohl der arme Aussätzige ‚anklopft‘. Jetzt versteht

der Betrachter, dass dem Zug der Bettler bereits dasselbe Los zuteil geworden ist. Die Städter sind nicht bereit, die ‚Tür zu öffnen‘ und Almosen zu geben. Auch ist jetzt klar, dass der Petrarca-Meister einige sprichwörtliche Redensarten verbildlicht hat. Erstens einmal „von Tür zu Tür gehen“, eine Redensart für „betteln“,<sup>45</sup> zweitens „anklopfen“ für „bitten“ oder „betteln“, drittens „vor geschlossenen Türen stehen“.<sup>46</sup> Der Zug der Bettler steht „vor geschlossener Tür“. Von der geschlossenen Tür im Vordergrund gleitet der Blick des Betrachters die Hausmauer entlang, bis er bei einer zweiten Tür Halt macht: Er entdeckt, dass auch dort eine Gruppe obdachloser Bettler „vor geschlossener Tür“ steht (F). Diese Beobachtung wird sofort noch einmal wiederholt (G). Vor allen Türen stehen also Gruppen von Bettlern, jedoch alle Türen bleiben geschlossen. Im Verein mit dem kahlen Pflaster macht dies einen gespenstischen Eindruck. Die Bettler verlangen Almosen, jedoch die Städter tun so, als ob niemand zu Hause sei.

Das Bild funktioniert auch hier als *religiöses Meditationsbild*, das den Leser emotionalisieren und zum richtigen Verhalten anspornen soll. Das Bild erzeugt Mitleiden mit den Ärmsten der Armen, die man draußen vor der Tür stehen lässt. Die Direktive, die die Bildrhetorik vermittelt, ist: Hab Erbarmen! Gib den Bettlern Almosen!

Dies führt nun von Petrarcas stoischer Affektbekämpfung weit weg. Während der Text den Schmerz über die Armut bekämpft, verstärkt ihn der Petrarca-Meister, ja ruft ihn im vollen Ausmaß erst hervor. Während der Text aufzeigt, dass Armut gesund mache, zeigt das Bild, dass die Armut Krüppel hervorbringe. Während die Text-Ratio vorführt, dass Armut leicht zu ertragen sei und glücklich mache, beweist das Bild mit allem Nachdruck, dass Armut unerträglich ist und die Armen in höchstem Maß bemitleidenswert sind. Während der Text demonstriert, dass die Emotion Dolor sich *nicht* rational begründen lässt, liefert das Bild gerade die nämliche rationale Begründung. Während der Text den Leser anleitet, über seine eigene Armut zu meditieren, lehrt ihn das Bild, wie er auf die Armut *anderer* reagieren soll.

Da sich die Bildrhetorik der Textrhetorik so vehement entgegensetzt, ist es völlig unwahrscheinlich, dass Brant der Urheber der Bild-Inventio war.

<sup>45</sup> Röhrich, *Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten* 1651, s.v. „Tür“.

<sup>46</sup> Röhrich, *Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten* 1650, s.v. „Tür“.

# Von armüt/ Das Achter Kapitel.

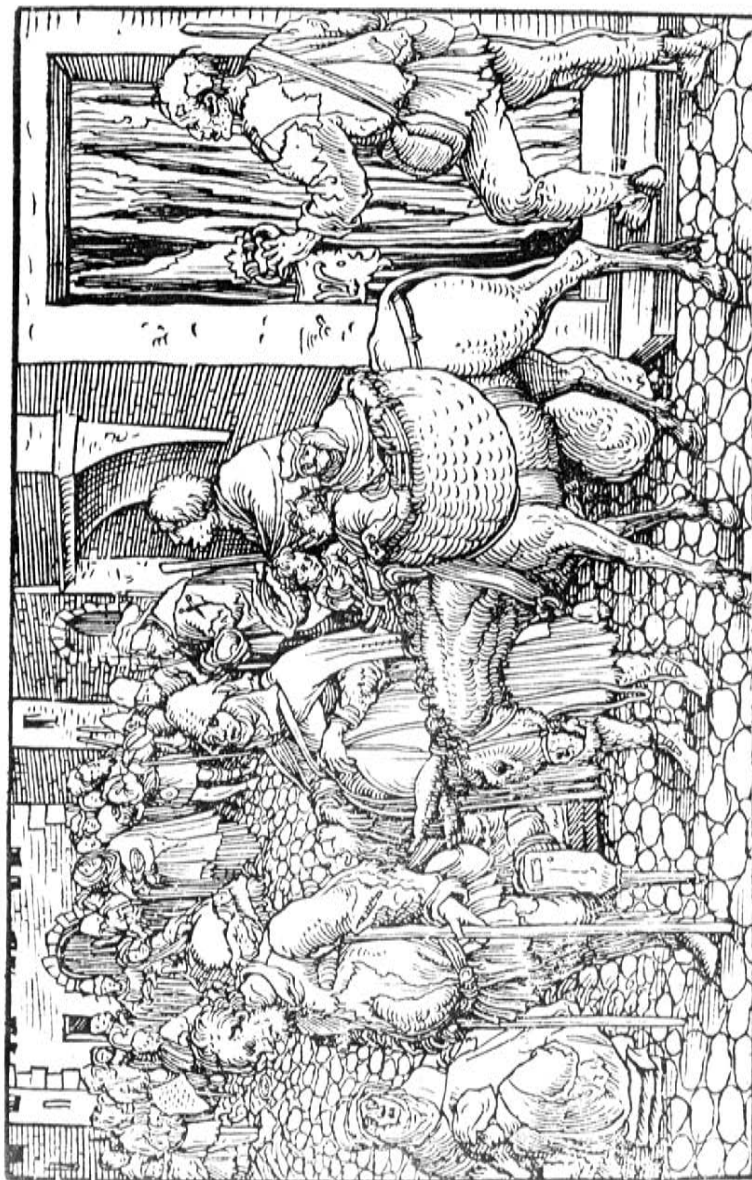


Abb. 40. Petrarca-Meister, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel II, 8.

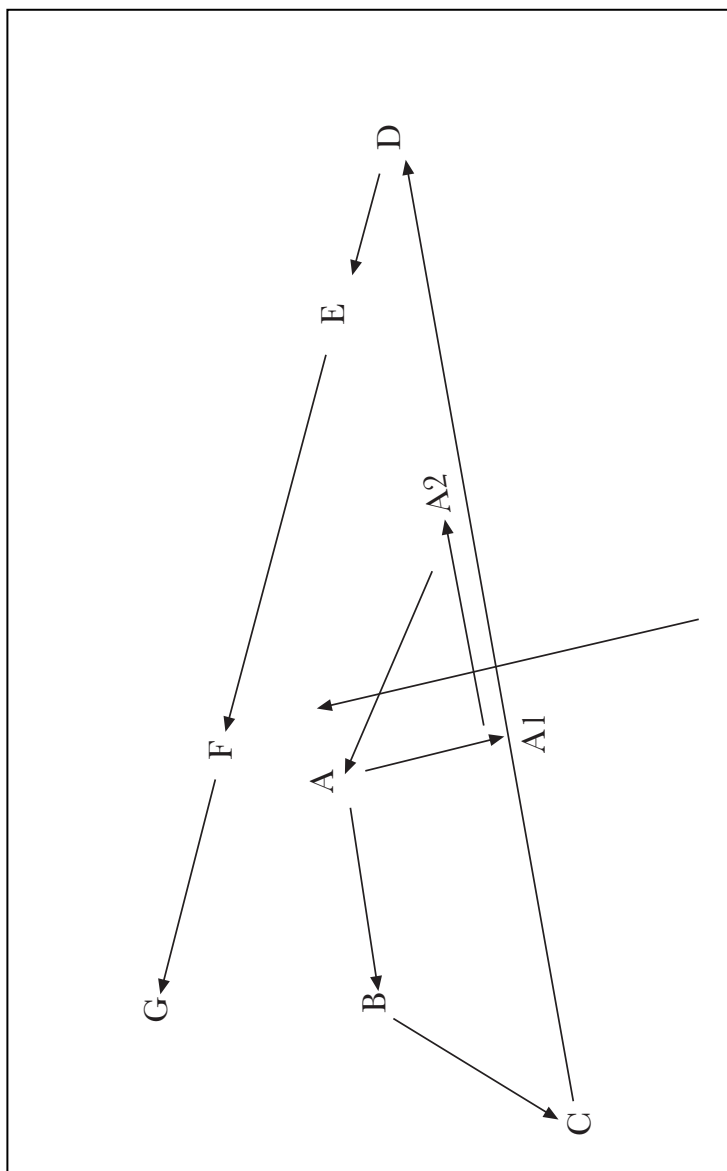


Abb. 41. Blickführungsskizze zu Holzschnitt II, 8.

In diesem Fall lässt sich die spezifische Verfasstheit und Tendenz der Bildrhetorik des Petrarca-Meisters gerade durch Interimaginalität und Intertextualität mit dem *Narrenschiff* (Nr. 63) weiter abklären. Zugleich wird anhand der Transponierung von *Narrenschiff* Nr. 63 ins Bild von Kap. II, 8 die sublimen Darstellungskunst des Petrarca-Meisters ersichtlich. In *Narrenschiff* Nr. 63 zeigt Brant im Text auf, dass die Bettler ein verwerfliches, heuchlerisches, habsüchtiges und unersättliches Gesindel darstellen, das die Städte belagert. Statt betteln zu gehen soll der Mensch etwas Vernünftiges leisten (Z. 22–26). Bettler verdienen kein Mitleid: Sie haben immer etwas zu essen (Z. 36) und ihr eigentliches Ziel ist es sich zu bereichern (Z. 2). Das Bild des *Narrenschiffs* zeigt dazu ein Bettlerpaar mit Esel und fünf Kindern im Korb [Abb. 42], das der zentralen Figurengruppe im Bild des Petrarca-Meisters sehr ähnlich ist [Abb. 40]. Jedoch geht aus dem Detailvergleich die völlig unterschiedliche Ausrichtung des Bildes hervor. Die Abbildung zum *Narrenschiff* will die Bettler als Heuchler demaskieren, die Abbildung des Petrarca-Meisters ihr Leid in vollem Umfang zeigen und Mitleid erwecken.

Das Bild des *Narrenschiffs* zeigt eine Bettlergruppe, die fröhlich durchs Land zieht. Der Mann führt ein lustiges Hündchen an der Leine, der Esel hat die Ohren munter aufgerichtet und macht gerade einen zügigen Schritt. Die Bettlerin trinkt aus einem Sack und hat außerdem am Gürtel einen Beutel mit Geld hängen. Die Bettlergruppe des Petrarca-Meisters ist hingegen niedergeschlagen und kommt nicht mehr weiter [Abb. 40]. Der Mann ist viel schwerer bedient als der des *Narrenschiff*-Holzschnitts. Statt eines einfachen Stabes bedarf er zweier hoher Krücken. Der *Narrenschiff*-Bettler ist noch im Besitz seines unteren Beines, der Bettler des Petrarca-Meisters hat es verloren. Er hat völlig zerfetzte Kleider, während der *Narrenschiff*-Bettler über ein ordentliches Mäntelchen verfügt. Der Bettler des Petrarca-Meisters hat den Blick resignierend gesenkt, der *Narrenschiff*-Bettler „blickt nach vorne“, genauso wie sein Esel. Der Esel des Petrarca-Meisters hingegen hat den Kopf erschöpft gesenkt. Statt eine kräftige Schrittbewegung zu machen steht er nahezu still. Die Frau, die im *Narrenschiff*-Bild fröhlich trinkt, hat der Petrarca-Meister in eine Hochschwängere verwandelt, für die jeder Schritt eine Belastung darstellt. Der Petrarca-Meister hat hier mit hoher Erfindungskunst ein Bild des Narrenspiegel-Diskurses in ein ergreifendes Meditationsbild eines religiösen Erbauungsbuches transponiert, das – statt zu demaskieren – zu Mitleid und Nächstenliebe anspornt.



Abb. 42. Sebastian Brant, *Narrenschiff*, Holzschnitt zu Kapitel Nr. 63.



*Epilog*

Fassen wir zusammen: Bild- und Textrhetorik funktionieren nicht auf dieselbe Weise noch leisten sie dasselbe. Der Textdiskurs des stoischen Meditationshandbuchs wird in den meisten Bild-Inventionen nicht wiederholt. Die Bildrhetorik weist durch Diskursverankerungen in der Lutheranischen Religionspolemik, im *Speculum morale*, im Narrenspiegel, im Volksbuch, im Sprichwort-Diskurs, in der praktischen Weltbemeisterung und im religiösen Meditationsbuch wesentliche, zum Teil spektakuläre und folgenreiche Erweiterungen und Änderungen auf. Von einer möglichst kontingenten Abbildungsmethode kann nicht die Rede sein.

Haben diese multiplen Lesesteuerungen dem frühneuzeitlichen Leser die Lektüre bis zur Unverdaulichkeit erschwert? Ich glaube nicht, dass dies das Richtige trifft. Ich möchte die Hypothese wagen, dass die Diskursverlegungen der Bildrhetorik den Wirkungsbereich und den Appeal des Buches im Gegenteil vergrößert haben. Ein stoisches Meditationshandbuch, wie ihn der lateinische Text anbietet, war für den mit der antiken lateinischen Literatur vertrauten Leser ein verständliches und ohne weiteres nachvollziehbares Leseangebot. Das gilt jedoch nicht auf dieselbe Weise in Bezug auf den breiteren Leserkreis des deutschen Textes. Dieser Leserkreis war mit anderen Diskursen vertrauter, z.B. dem des *Speculum morale*, des Narrenspiegels, der Religionspolemik, des Sprichwort-Diskurses, der praktischen Weltbemeisterung und des religiösen Meditationsbuches. Diese Diskursverankerungen der Bildrhetorik verbuchen somit die Rezeptionswirkung, dass sie einerseits den Leser durch für ihn lesbare Bilder an den weniger leicht verständlichen Text des stoischen Meditationshandbuchs heranführen, andererseits *den Text* an dem Leser bekannte Verständnisbereiche heranführen. Was die erste Wirkung betrifft, dürfen wir nicht in die verlockende Falle geraten, sie als eine bis ins Detail geplante Intention des Illustrators und schon gar nicht des Humanisten Sebastian Brant aufzufassen. Es handelt sich vielfach um Verbildlichungsprozesse, die auf eingeffleichten und damit sozusagen automatischen Bahnen ablaufen: Das Unbekannte und Schwierigere wird in Bekanntes übergeführt. Diese auf die Rezeption ausgerichtete Interpretation entwertet den illustrierten deutschen Petrarca keineswegs, im Gegenteil: Indem ein stoisches Meditationshandbuch durch die Bilder in den Diskurs des *Speculum morale*, des Narrenspiegels, der praktischen Weltbemeisterung oder des religiösen Meditationsbuches übergeführt

wurde, vergrößerte dies den Wirkungsbereich enorm: Der Benutzer hielt ein Werk in Händen, mit dessen Hilfe er nicht nur sein Innenleben, sondern die ganze Welt, Irdisches und Himmlisches gleichermaßen, in seiner ganzen Komplexität bemeistern konnte. Ein solches Buch war mit Gold aufzuwiegen. Gerade dadurch erklärt sich sein enormer Erfolg.

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## SPECULATIVE IMAGERY IN PETRARCH'S *VON DER ARTZNEY BAYDER GLUECK* (1532)

Reindert Falkenburg

This contribution entails an effort to understand the rhetorical structure of the visual imagery in the first German edition of Petrarch's *De remediis, Von der Artzney bayder Glueck*, published in Augsburg in 1532. It contains 261 woodcuts made by an anonymous artist known as the 'Petrarca-Meister' who, according to the prologue of the work, based his designs on the 'visierlicher Angebung des Hochgelehrten Doctoris Sebastiani Brant.' These instructions, it has always been assumed, played a mayor role in planning the woodcuts, especially as the drawings were finished by 1520, i.e. before the German translation of the Latin text had been fully completed. Since it is known from Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff* (1494) that the humanist usually personally involved himself in the planning of the 'illustration' of his books, scholars have gathered that in the case of the *Von der Artzney bayder Glueck* the instruction of the Petrarca-Meister must at least have included the communication, by the humanist, of the general tenor of each chapter, as well as some anecdotal details and specific motifs from Petrarch's exposition, since the designer of the woodcuts supposedly was not able to read Latin. Still, it is generally assumed that the artist must have been granted, or have appropriated for himself, a relative freedom in designing the woodcuts since in many cases there is a rather loose thematic connection between image and text. One additional factor has contributed to the tendency among art historians to downplay, or even disregard, the connection between text and image in *Von der Artzney bayder Glueck*. This is the idea that the imagery employed in the woodcuts falls under the (actually 18th-century) category of 'genre' or 'Sittenbild', i.e. the 'realistic' representation of scenes, situations and settings taken from 'daily life'. This notion of 'Sittenbild' has been taken to be charged with the artist's critical, even 'revolutionary', stance towards the social and political circumstances of his time, instigated by the critical tone in Petrarch's text against the vicissitudes of *Fortuna*.<sup>1</sup> Raupp has qualified these images as

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Scheidig W., *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* (Berlin: 1955);

‘Lehrbilder’, arguing that, instead of bespeaking a revolutionary attitude, the woodcuts express a conservative moral that is rooted in the medieval ‘Standeslehre’ but, at the same time, reflects the social ideals of an emerging urban (humanist) culture.<sup>2</sup> According to him, the ‘realistic’ mode of representation in these woodcuts is rooted in the medieval *exempla*-tradition and propagates this moral through a pictorial didaxe that inversely reflects the structure of the dispute between *Vernunft* (Reason) and the (Stoic set of ‘unreasoning’) passions, *Freud* (representing *spes* and *gaudium* in the original Latin version) and *Schmerz* (representing *dolor* and *metus*) in Petrarch’s text.<sup>3</sup> Whereas the dispute in the text is dominated by the elaborate expositions of reason while the passions have only been allotted narrow-minded ‘one-liners’, most woodcuts put all visual emphasis on the depiction of circumstances and characters representing the point of view of the passions. These images, Raupp suggests, function as inverse ‘Lehrbilder’ pointing the viewer—often with an inner-pictorial critique of man’s ‘passionate’ reactions to the whims of fortune in the margin of the composition—to the desired moral, translating, or rather transforming, Petrarch’s lessons of reason into a pictorial didactics of late medieval social order.<sup>4</sup>

While I cannot respond here to all aspects of Raupp’s reasoning, I would like to take issue with the notion that the woodcuts of the Petrarca-Meister are to be understood as ‘Lehrbilder’ of a fixed moral order. Whereas art historians have related these images to the world of outward appearances and social values, literary historians and scholars of early humanism have emphasized the inner-worldly nature of the dispute between reason and the passions that structures Petrarch’s text. While Heitmann has discussed *De remediis* in the context of the *psychomachia*-tradition, McClure has called attention to its resonance with the ancient and Christian *consolatio* genre; to a lesser degree,

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Steinmann U., “Zur politischen Tendenz des Petrarca-Meisters. Seine Stellungnahme gegen die Wahl Karls V. und sein Verhalten zu den Ereignissen in Württemberg”, *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-DDR. Forschungen und Berichte* 6 (1964) 40–90.

<sup>2</sup> Raupp H.-J., “Die Illustrationen zu Francesco Petrarca ‘Von der Artzney bayder Glueck des guten und widerwertigen’ (Augsburg 1532)”, *Wallraf-Richartz Jahrbuch* 45 (1984) 59–112, and id., *Bauernsatiren. Entstehung und Entwicklung des bäuerlichen Genres in der deutschen und niederländischen Kunst ca. 1470–1570* (Niederzier: 1986) 9–34.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Diekstra F.N.M., *A Dialogue between Reason and Adversity. A late Middle English Version of Petrarch’s De Remediis* (Assen: 1968) 42–43.

<sup>4</sup> See Raupp, “Die Illustrationen zu Francesco Petrarca” 105.

Petrarch's text has been related to the vast and diverse medieval genre of *speculum* literature.<sup>5</sup> What these genres have in common is that they address inner man, his tribulations, and remedies to overcome them. In Petrarch, this results in a *speculum* of the dispute between opposing forces, or faculties, of the soul: reason and the passions (Hope, Joy, Fear and Sorrow), chained as the latter are to the whims of fortune. The strategy he follows is to show that the absolute way humans usually think about the opposition of happiness and unhappiness is false. This strategy is based on the philosophical discussion in the Middle Ages on what constitutes true happiness, the *summum bonum*.<sup>6</sup> In as far as human happiness is based on the goods of fortune (wealth, power, honour etc.) or bodily goods (strength, beauty etc.), this happiness is transitory and subject to animosity, loss, and feelings of deprivation and sorrow.<sup>7</sup> Only goods of the soul bring happiness, though not the longings of the lower irrational part of the soul, such as hope and joy, but the higher powers of the soul—reason, memory and will—that can lead the soul to acquire *virtus*—especially reason, which can offer *consolatio* from suffering and the vicissitudes of life and lead the mind, through speculation and contemplation, to God. Speculation, then, is the interpretive act that offers consolation from the soul's attachment to the goods of fortune, the vicissitudes of life, and bodily goods, and brings true happiness in the precepts of reason. According to Hamburger, speculation in the Christian tradition of the Middle Ages comprises the mental activity of meditation and contemplation, which, following Paul's phrase (1 *Corinthians* 13:12), 'For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face, now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I am also known', takes the visible world as a point of departure for a mental ascent that culminates in the *visio Dei*.<sup>8</sup> Speculation in this tradition is the spiritual

<sup>5</sup> See Heitmann K., *Fortuna und Virtus. Eine Studie zu Petrarcas Lebensweisheit* (Köln-Graz: 1958); and McClure G.W., *Sorrow and Consolation in Italian Humanism* (Princeton: 1991) 46–72. Particularly relevant for the embedding of *De remediis* in the *consolatio* and the *speculum* traditions is the fact that ever since *Von der Artzney beyder Glueck* was reprinted in the 16th century (i.e. in 1539, 1545, 1551, 1559, 1572, 1584 and 1596), the book was called a "Trostspiegel", a "mirror of comfort", cf. Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 7.

<sup>6</sup> Diekstra, *A Dialogue between Reason and Adversity* 51.

<sup>7</sup> Diekstra, *A Dialogue between Reason and Adversity* 52–57.

<sup>8</sup> See Hamburger J.F., "Speculations on Speculation. Vision and Perception in the Theory and Practice of Mystical Devotion", in Haug W. – Schneider-Lastin W. (eds.), *Deutsche Mystik im abendländischen Zusammenhang. Neu erschlossene Texte, neue metho-*



exercise of the inner eye: the meditative process of perfecting inner vision, which leads the soul from attachment to the world to contemplation of God. Seen in this perspective, Petrarch's *Trostspiegel* offers the reader a *fundus* for speculation, for exercising the *virtus* of spiritual vision through the meditation of text and image, and their interplay.

In order to understand the pictorial rhetoric of the woodcuts in *Von der Artzney bayder Glueck*, an activity that naturally and not just incidentally should take the relation between text and image into account, it is important to note that the inversive relationship between, on the one hand, the argumentative space given to reason and the limited objections of the passions in the text, and, on the other hand, the visual emphasis on man's attachment to the goods of fortune and bodily goods in the images, should be seen in the broader context of the contradictory strategy of the book as a whole. In the first part Reason tries to cure the soul from its attachment to good fortune by relying on the beneficial effect of pointing out the fickleness and transience etc. of prosperity; in the second, he changes strategy and speaks positively of certain disasters in order to make others more bearable. This shifting of perspectives, contradicting and relegating notions of good and bad, heavily relies on, and is aimed at, the participation of the reader and his willingness to reflect upon, and overcome, his personal afflictions and predilections. The visual elaboration of the goods of fortune and bodily goods in the woodcuts, and their inversive mirror-relationship to the elaborations of Reason in the text, are integral part of this overall strategy to offer the reader and viewer a *speculum* for self-reflection and contemplation. These woodcuts, therefore, do not straightforwardly express a self-contained truth value—the value system they represent, within the composition of the book as a whole and in the context of each individual chapter, fundamentally undermines a 'positivist' reading of their form or content. Their true subject matter is not the point of view represented

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dische Ansätze, neue theoretische Konzepte. Kolloquium Kloster Fischingen 1998 (Tübingen: 2000) 353–407. Central to this tradition, and particularly important for an understanding of visual imagery as *machinae* for meditation, are (originally monastic, but later wider spread) medieval *memoria* practices, see, among others, Carruthers M., *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400–1200* (Cambridge: 1998). For the importance of spiritual vision in late-medieval visual culture, see Lenten T., "Inneres Auge, äusserer Blick und heilige Schau. Ein Diskussionsbeitrag zur visuellen Praxis in Frömmigkeit und Moraldidaxe des späten Mittelalters", in Schreiner K. – Müntz M. (eds.), *Frömmigkeit im Mittelalter. Politisch-soziale Kontexte, visuelle Praxis, körperliche Ausdrucksformen* (München: 2002) 179–220.

in the image, but the insight and self-knowledge that the viewer forges in his speculation on the image. The pictorial rhetoric does not allow for a stable type of reading either. Here are a few examples.

As several authors have observed, the pictorial narrative in many woodcuts is characterized by a bipolar, but imbalanced compositional structure. One part of the image represents (also in the sense of: stands for) the side of the passions, depicting a scene, an event or set of circumstances that stirs the emotions; the protagonists here are often, but not always, placed in the foreground and dominate the composition by their size as well as dynamic and dramatic actions. The other side is given to the position of Reason, which is represented by a much smaller scene that is often relegated to an inconspicuous place in the background or the margin of the composition; the figures here are often fewer in number, their gestures less dramatic, and the scenery as a whole being visually far less appealing than its counterpart. This compositional structure suggests a facile reading and immediate grasp of the purport of the image, but often this is not the case. In a woodcut representing 'Von scheinbarer kost', for example, the visual emphasis is on the dining room of a wealthy patrician displaying a richly laid table covered with all kinds of fine foods, drinks and costly dinnerware [Fig. 1].<sup>9</sup> His guests have turned their back on their host, not because they do not like his offerings but because these gluttons already literally have had their fill, even before arriving at the party; way back in the distance, on the far left of the composition, can be discerned (with quite some difficulty) the figures of two hermits, Paul and Anthony, who in the seclusion of a wilderness are being fed by a raven. Clearly, so it seems, gluttony, or the wallowing in worldly foods, is contrasted with an exemplum of spiritual nutrition. Less clear, however, is the way one reaches this conclusion. Even with the help of the oratory exposition of reason in the accompanying text—which, among a variety of historical figures exemplifying the virtue of temperance also mentions the desert fathers—it is very difficult to identify the figures in the shrub in the distance as Paul and Anthony. It seems as if the artist has wilfully obscured the visual argument of reason. However, the fact that the

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<sup>9</sup> See *Franciscus Petrarca, Von der Artzney bayder Glueck/des guten vnd widerwertigen*, ed. M. Lemmer (Hamburg: 1984), I, chap. 18 (further cited as: *Von der Artzney*); cf. Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 63.

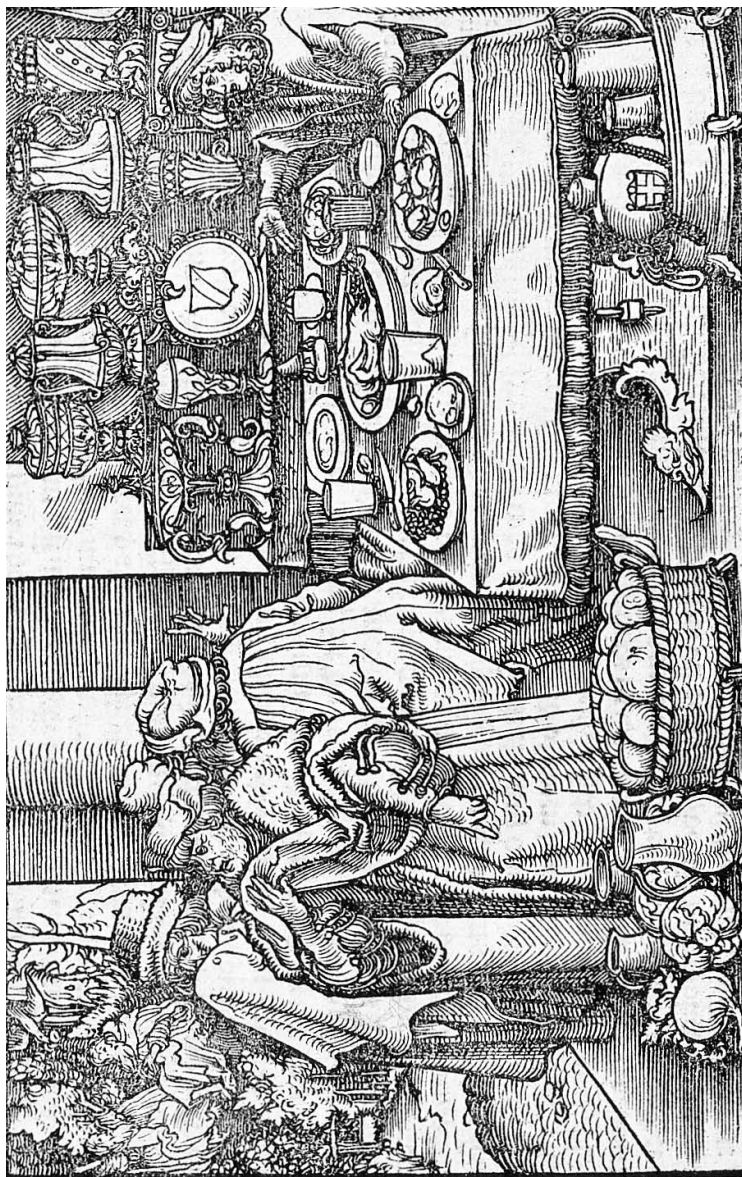


Fig. 1. "Von scheinbarer kost". *Von der Artzney beyder Glueck* (1532),  
Bk. I, chap. 18, fol. 19v.

composition in quite a few other woodcuts follows the same pattern may facilitate this discovery. The chapter entitled 'Vonn gehoffter Glori des Gepeiis' employs a similar mode of staging hindsight [Fig. 2].<sup>10</sup> The wish for glory is the real patron of the mansion that is being erected in the foreground; much attention is given to the building activity—the opposite forces of decay and ruination are only visible in a few inconspicuous motifs in the background, which put the proud enterprise in the foreground in a different perspective (literally and figuratively). In the woodcut 'Von dem Ellend' [Fig. 3], the complaint of 'Sorrow' that he is driven into exile due to injustice is given visual expression by a scene, to the right, of a man who is forced to swear to his judge that he will never return to his home country; on the left he is beaten out of the courtroom.<sup>11</sup> In the background landscape, a small scene represents the vision of the Apocalyptic woman who appears to St. John the Evangelist, who was exiled to the island of Patmos. This vision offers a relativistic gloss on Sorrow's complaint of suffering injustice, as it brings to mind the future and Last Judgment of all mankind (trespassers of the law as well as their earthly judges)—St. John's vision acting as a consoling 'eye-opener' to the searching mind of the viewer.

While these examples suggest that the marginal scene in the background represents the 'right' side of the argument, other woodcuts make the reader question such a simple assumption. The woodcut titled 'Von einem schweren Geschefft' [Fig. 4] shows the office and well-filled storehouse of a thriving business; its owner sits behind a desk keeping the books.<sup>12</sup> The hardship of work is the subject of this chapter and Reason does not get tired responding to the repeated complaints of Sorrow that 'virtue lives in lofty places and cannot easily be achieved: the way leading to this goal is broken, sharp and stony' and that 'work heals the mind'.<sup>13</sup> Probably inspired by the

<sup>10</sup> *Von der Artzney* I, chap. 118, fols. CXLr–CXLir; cf. Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 182.

<sup>11</sup> *Von der Artzney* II, chap. 67, fols. LXXIXr–LXXXv; cf. Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 265.

<sup>12</sup> *Von der Artzney* II, chap. 56, fols. LXVIv–LXVIIv; cf. Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 252–253.

<sup>13</sup> *Von der Artzney* II, chap. 56, fol. LXVIv ('alle tugent wonen in der hoehe, vnd mügen nicht leichtlich erlangt werden, unnd ist ein zerbrochener, scharpffer, schlegiger unnd steiniger wege darzue'); fol. LXVIIr ('Vilen leuten ist die arbeyt ein artzney gewesen [. . .] dann man wayst, das die arbeyt die gemuet heylt').



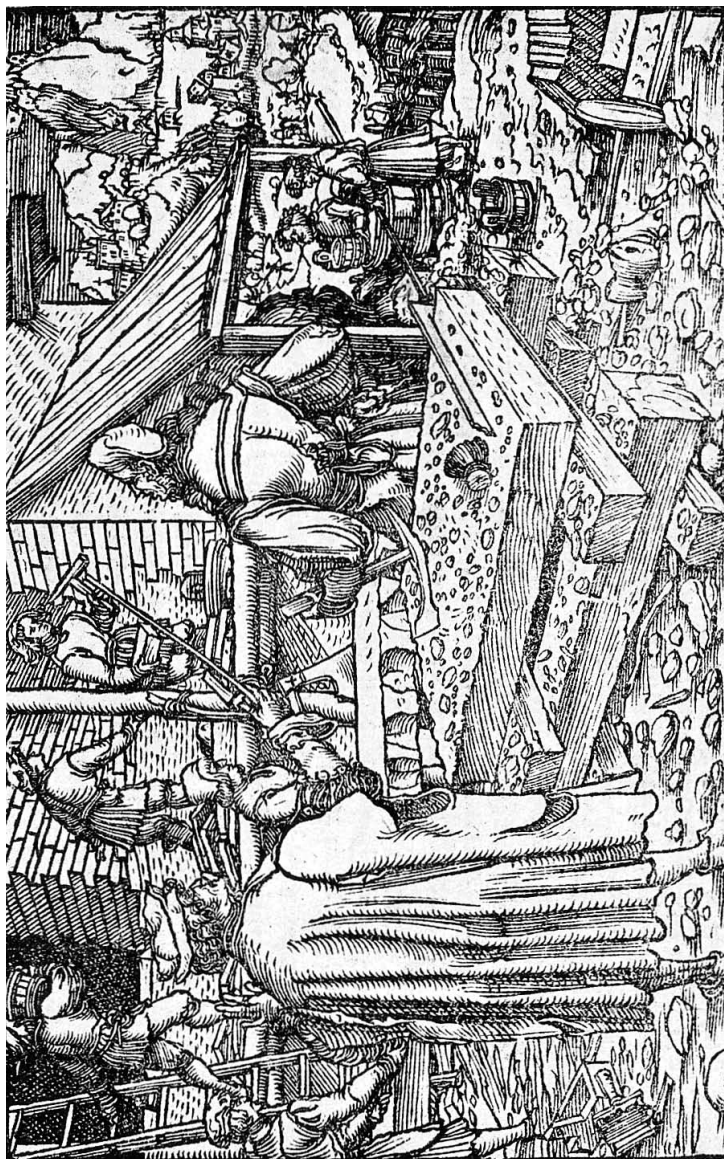


Fig. 2. "Vonn gehoffter Glori des Gepeits". *Von der Artzney beyder Glueck* (1532),  
Bk. I, chap. 118, fol. 140r.

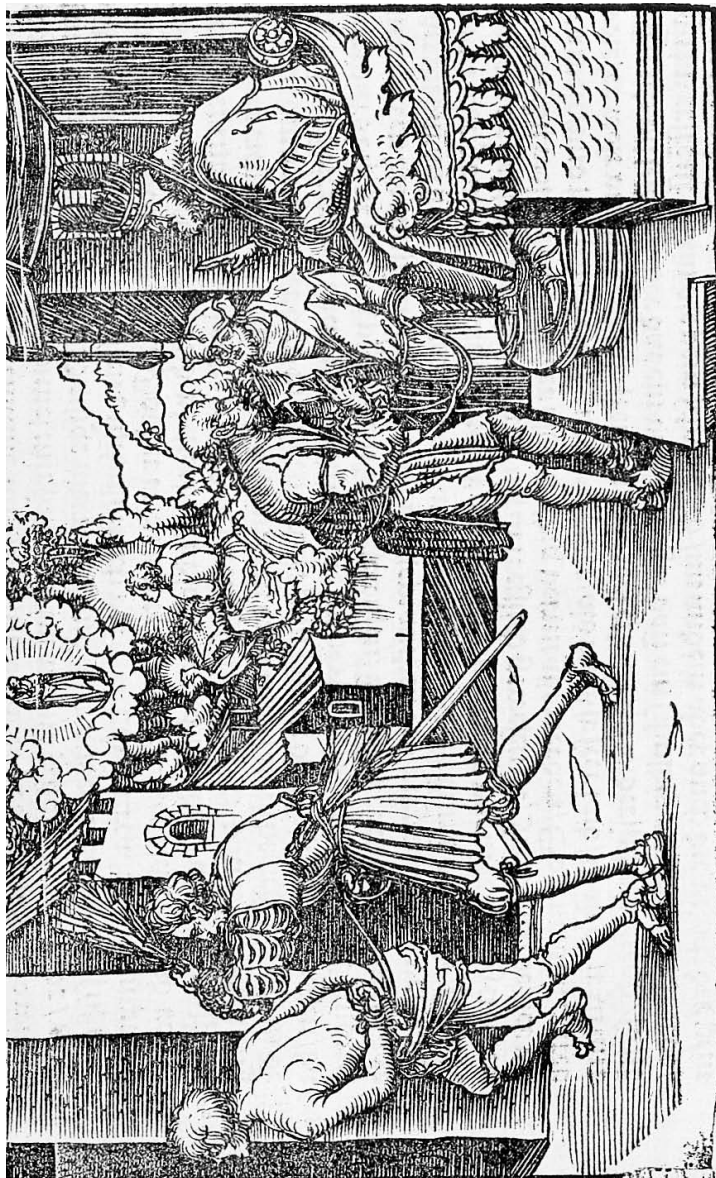


Fig. 3. "Von dem Ellend". *Von der Artzney beyder Glueck* (1532),  
Bk. II, chap. 67, fol. 79r.



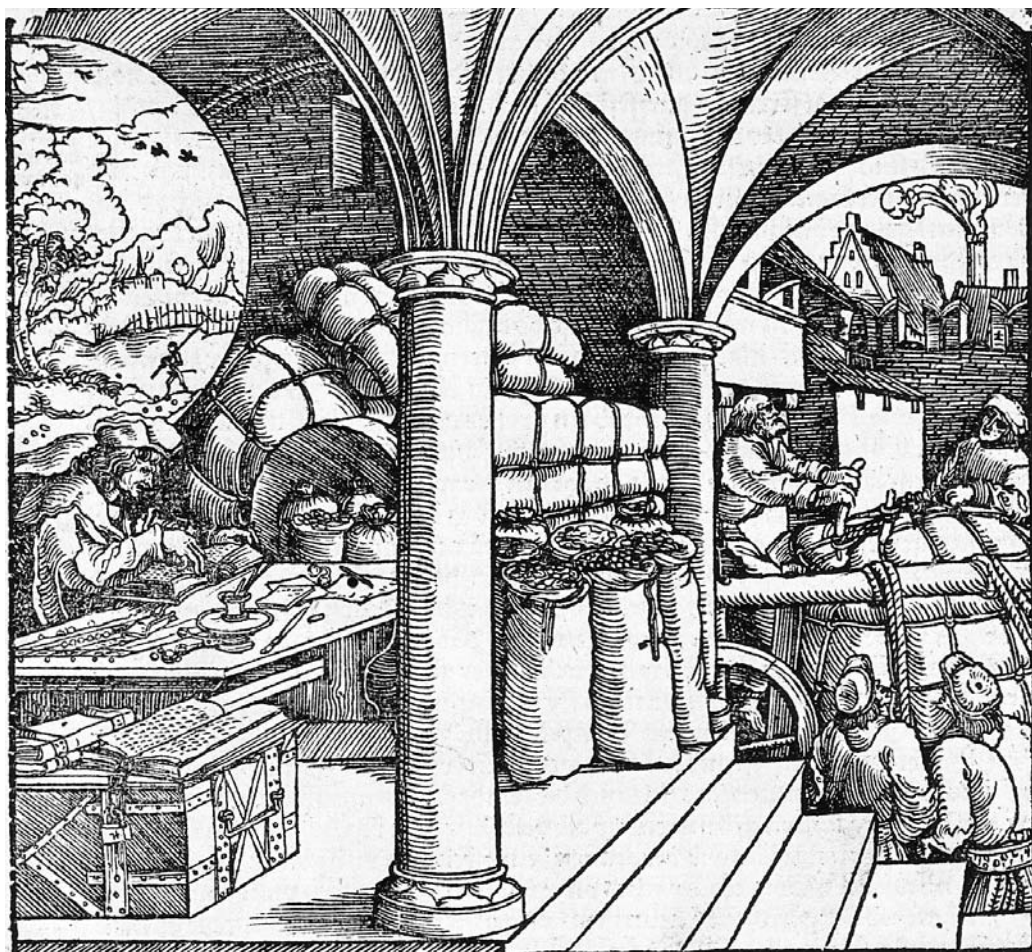


Fig. 4. "Von einem schweren Geschefft". *Von der Artzney bayder Glueck* (1532), Bk. II, chap. 56, fol. 66v.

well-known metaphor of the easy versus the hard way of life (cf. *Matthew* 7:13–14), the artist has chosen to represent a scene complementary to that of hard work in the form of a fantasy image behind the merchant's head depicting a wanderer who takes a stroll in a pleasant landscape. It is clear from the text (which calls hard work a 'remedy for the mind') that the main scene, while showing the accumulation of material goods, actually represents the position of Reason, whereas the 'fantasy bubble' behind the merchant's head (which because of its circular form evokes the iconography of Atlas carrying the weight of the world on his shoulders) reflects the censurable longings of Sorrow. The woodcut accompanying the next chapter, 'Von dem harten weg', defies any unequivocally fixed reading of the bipolar structure of the composition [Fig. 5].<sup>14</sup> The image shows a tired wanderer in the centre of the composition tending his sore feet. He sits at a junction of the road like a 'Hercules at a crossroad': to the right a smooth path takes a pilgrim to a prosperous town in the background; to the left (taking up a considerably smaller portion of the image) a beggar stumbles along the angular curves of an arduous path. The road chapel immediately behind the resting wanderer in the foreground shows, on the side of the prosperous city view, a representation of the Passion; the panel on the side that is turned to the beggar is empty—mirroring the barren landscape through which the beggar proceeds. The question is, does the rendering of the Crucifixion 'sanctify' the path of the pilgrim on the right, and the empty panel 'condemn' the road of the beggar?<sup>15</sup> Or is the choice less obvious than it seems at first sight?—the coarse road cross marking the path of the beggar suggests the relevance of second thoughts, especially in view of the Biblical metaphor of the broad way leading to perdition versus the narrow way leading to salvation. The accompanying text makes the heuristic even more complex. It has Sorrow complain: 'I'm treading a long and hard path in sorrow'—to which

<sup>14</sup> *Von der Artzney* II, chap. 57, fols. LXVIIIr–LXIXr; cf. Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 254.

<sup>15</sup> Raupp, "Die Illustrationen zu Francesco Petrarca" 84, for example, thinks that the beggar—follows the road 'without grace', whereas the pilgrim 'wanders in the grace of God': 'Das Links-Rechts-Schema scheidet den heillosen Bettler von dem Pilger, der in der Gnade Gottes wandelt, der Stationsweg erinnert an Christi Gang nach Golgotha, der Pilger verweist auf die irdische Gefolgschaft Christi und natürlich auf die zahlreichen biblischen Mahnungen, dass die Menschen auf Erden nur Pilger und Fremde seien'.





Fig. 5. "Von dem harten weg". *Von der Artzney bayder Gluck* (1532),  
Bk. II, chap. 57, fol. 68r.

Reason responds: 'Nothing softens a hard path more, and comforts a sad and sorrowful mind more than honest and loving cares, which can only inhabit the heart of a devout and learned man and which are his companion in all his travels. If one adds a pleasant company, a good-humoured and eloquent friend, then the road will not only seem light but also short'.<sup>16</sup> This text leads the reader to the insight that 'treading a long and hard path' (such as the beggar on the left does) in itself indeed is not bad—what is bad is doing so in a sorrowful state of mind. Reason explains that if the traveller has good company—and the phrase 'eloquent friend' may be read as suggestive of the speaker, *ratio*, herself—the road will actually transform into an easy path. The right part of the image, then, is not so much a representation of the easy path *per se*, but can be seen, on closer inspection, as the hard path (marked by the image of the Crucifixion) transformed into an easy way (see the pleasant surroundings), trodden by a 'devout' man (the pilgrim). The resting wanderer, and with him the viewer of the woodcut, is thus given the option to follow (i.e. keep on following) the limping beggar, or to change his direction, and his perspective, in imitation of the pilgrim and to experience the hard path as an easy one, 'comforted' by Reason (and Christ who suffered for mankind on the Cross).

These analyses show that an interpretation attaching an absolute value to these images based on a simple 'good' versus 'bad' scheme, misses the point. The antithetical but at the same time asymmetrical structure of the composition (often entailing an interpretive 'eye-opener' scene in the margin), the fact that the visual arrangement of the argumentative position of Reason and Sorrow in the composition is not consistent throughout the book, and the fact that its argumentative structure as a whole is fundamentally self-contradictory and relativistic<sup>17</sup> all contribute to an interpretive process of 'speculation'

<sup>16</sup> *Von der Artzney* II, chap. 57, fol. LXIXr: '*Schmerz*. Ich gee in traurigkait ein langen und harten weg. *Vernunft*. Nichts erwaicht so seer ein harten weg, und troest ein betruetbtes unnd traurigs gemuet, als edle und liepliche sorge, woelche nit künden wonen, dann in den herzen eines frummen und gelehrten manns, und in allen raisen gferen sein. Wann nun dazu kompt auch ein angenehme gesellschaft, eynes froelichen unnd wol beredten freunds, so wirt einen der weg nit allein leicht, sondern auch kurz duncken'.

<sup>17</sup> Kuhn H.C., "Spannungen und Spannendes in Petrarca's Schrift über die Heilmittel gegen beiderlei Fortuna", in <http://www.phil-hum-ren.uni-muenchen.de/SekLit/P2004A/Kuhn.htm> 3–4, has pointed out that *ratio* in Petrarch's text is actually not the 'winner' in its disputes with *gaudium* but the 'looser'.

that entails a shift of perspective—from sight to insight. The single most important operation that the image demands from the viewer, then, is a transformation of the way he sees and thinks. The image ‘remedies’ the viewer (as much as the text) by letting him take the medicine of insight against the illness of quick and superficial judgment regarding good and bad fortune, to which mankind is inclined to succumb.

There is a second, slightly different method of involving the viewer in this process of speculation employed in these woodcuts. This is the visual strategy to complicate and obstruct, rather than facilitate, an immediate understanding of the visual narrative by creating a cluttered composition, especially in the grouping of the main figures.<sup>18</sup> This phenomenon can be observed, for example, in the chapter dealing with ‘Verretherey’ [Fig. 6].<sup>19</sup> The text starts with the complaint of Sorrow, ‘My friends have betrayed me’, to which Reason responds, ‘I think [you mean:] your enemies, because had they been your friends, they would not have betrayed you’. Sorrow repeats: ‘I have been betrayed by my inmates, my sympathizers [political friends]’, Reason answers: ‘Inmates or sympathizers are dubious terms that mean all kinds of things’.<sup>20</sup> The ambivalence and confusion regarding the concept of (political) friendship that is the subject of this brief discussion is echoed in the image. The foreground shows a group of armed knights capturing a sovereign; he is accompanied, it seems, by two counsellors. Not only these two men, but also the captors stand close to the king—in fact, the whole group is so cramped that one cannot really make out the exact nature of the action that is taking place: It looks more like a discussion among ‘friends’ than an act of treason or violence. Only the rope around the neck of the

<sup>18</sup> For a similar argument, regarding compositional obscurity and “chaos” in 16th-century landscape painting as rhetorical instruments for engaging the viewer in the imaginative aesthetics (and mental paradoxes) of sight and insight, see my “Doorzien als esthetische ervaring bij Pieter Bruegel I en het vroeg-zestiende-eeuwse landschap”, in id., *De uitwinding van het landschap. Van Patinir tot Rubens, 1520–1650* (Antwerp, exh. cat. Museum voor Schone Kunsten: 2004) 53–65.

<sup>19</sup> *Von der Artzney* II, chap. 80, fols. XCVr–v; cf. Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 281.

<sup>20</sup> *Von der Artzney* II, chap. 80, fols. XCVr–v: ‘Schmertz. Ich bin von den freunden verrathenn worden. Vernunft. Ich glaub vonn den feynden, denn weren sie freund, so verriethen sie dich nicht. Schmertz. Ich byn vonn meinen haus genossen, oder gesynd genossen verrathen wordenn. Vernunft. Hausgenossen oder gesindgenossen, seind zweyfelhaffte namen die mancherlay bedeutend’.



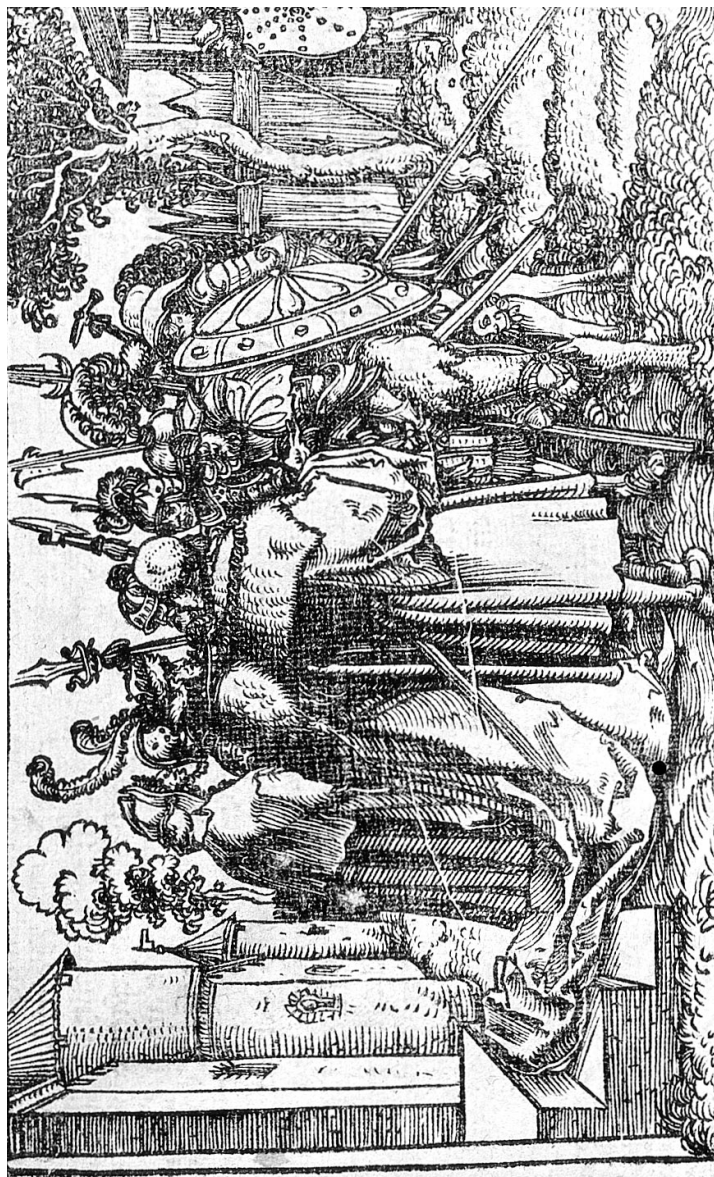


Fig. 6. "Von Verrethercy". *Von der Artzney beyder Gluck* (1532),  
Bk. II, chap. 80, fol. 95r.

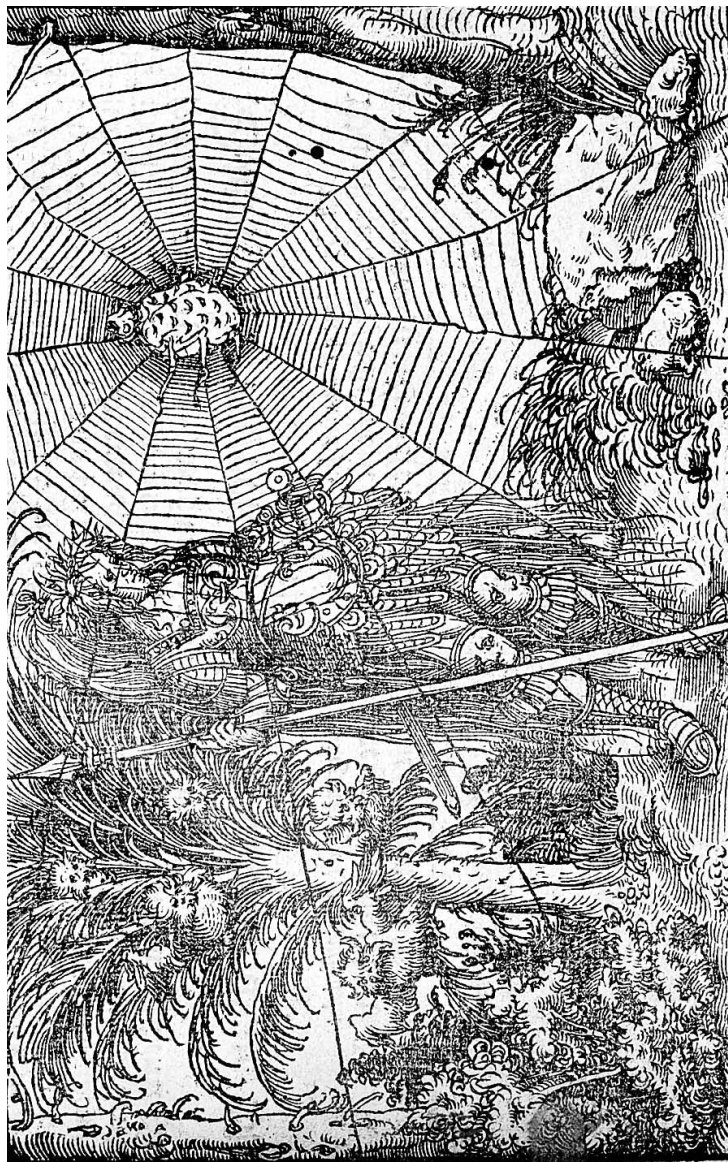


Fig. 7. "Von verstand". *Von der Artzney beyder Glueck* (1532),  
Bk. I, chap. 7, fol. 7r.



sovereign, which is hard to make out in the thicket of forms, indicates what is going on; the flamboyant feathers of the king's headdress, which repeats the headgear of the others (but also their spears and halberds), on the other hand adds to the impression of a gathering of kindred spirits. Who is actually the traitor remains open to interpretation: is it perhaps the lonely knight in the back, in the right margin of the composition, who 'guards' the territory of the sovereign but remains passive in the face of the events? Nothing in this image can be taken for granted; everything seems to be designed for a heuristic purpose in a web of obscurities that cannot reach a clear and fixed conclusion. This pictorial rhetoric of holding the mind captivated in a web of visual obstruction—in order, paradoxically, to act as an incentive for the viewer's liberation in speculative wisdom and understanding—is perhaps best exemplified in the woodcut at the beginning of the chapter 'Von verstand' [Fig. 7].<sup>21</sup> Here, the centre of the composition is occupied by the armoured figure of Pallas Athena, the personification of Wisdom (*nota bene*: the meaning of her name 'verstand' in *Von der Artzney* is close to, if not identical with, that of 'Vernunft' (Reason), the main orator in the dispute with the passions throughout the book). To the left, half-hidden in the foliage of a tree behind Athena, the faces of several owls emerge, attributes of the goddess. Her figure is partly covered by a huge spider web that takes up the rest of the composition to the right side. In the text, Reason explains that in antiquity the goddess of Wisdom was said to hate the spider because of the cleverness and subtleness with which she makes her web, which, however, is fragile and does not 'hold' against the sharpness of the sword of Reason—a denunciatory reference to the sophist way of arguing.<sup>22</sup> The woodcut transforms this antithesis into a visual argument, but gives it an unexpected twist. As Scheidig noticed, the web not only obscures the figure of the goddess—suggesting that cleverness may obscure the clear mind—but actually spreads out over the entire image.<sup>23</sup> Whereas the text, in other words, emphasizes the greater strength of wisdom, the image shows the power, and danger, of cleverness, i.e. false reasoning; the (moth-like shaped) owls of wisdom behind Pallas that the image seems to imply

<sup>21</sup> *Von der Artzney* I, chap. 7, fols. VIIr–v; cf. Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 50.

<sup>22</sup> *Von der Artzney* I, chap. 7, fol. VIIv.

<sup>23</sup> Scheidig, *Die Holzschnitte des Petrarca-Meisters* 50.

run the risk of being caught in the spider's web. The fact that the threads of this web literally cut through the eyes of Pallas and that, similarly, the web obstructs the viewer's grasp of this figure clearly signals that the visual rhetoric of the image is directed at a play of shifting, sometimes contradictory, perspectives in the mind of the beholder and reader. This image, placed at the beginning of one of the first chapters of *Von der Artzney* (fol. VIr), can be said to be emblematic for the medicinal role of the entire visual imagery in the book, geared, as it seems to be, at 'consoling' the eyes of the 'speculative' viewer.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> At another occasion I plan to elaborate this argument in the context of other Late Medieval and Early Modern examples of 'speculative imagery' in North-Western European art.

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16TH-CENTURY ITALIANS READING PETRARCH:  
BEMBO AND CARDANO



«QUEGLI AMORI CHE SON DOLCI  
SENZA AMARITUDINE»:  
THE PETRARCHIST BEMBO IN  
*THE BOOK OF THE COURTIER*

Bart Van den Bossche

*Castiglione's Pietro Bembo: a singular character?*

At first sight, it seems that Bembo's role as a character in *The Book of the Courtier*<sup>1</sup> is, at least in purely quantitative terms, not a crucial one. His interventions in the course of the first three books are sporadic and marginal, and when eventually, in the second part of the fourth book, he manages to occupy the front stage, it turns out that, of all the major characters in *The Courtier*, charged with the responsibility of elaborating on a topic,<sup>2</sup> Bembo is the one using the smallest amount of textual space to develop his argumentation and make his point: his discourse on the *felicità d'amore* occupies twenty chapters in the fourth book (IV, 50–70),<sup>3</sup> which is certainly not a negligible amount of text, but still significantly shorter than the textual space dedicated

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<sup>1</sup> On Bembo as a character in *The Courtier*, see Floriani P., "I personaggi del Cortegiano", *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana* 156 (1979) 161–78, now in *I gentiluomini letterati. Il dialogo culturale nel primo Cinquecento* (Naples: 1981) 50–67; Dilemmi G., "Il Bembo 'cortegiano'", in Ossola C. (ed.), *La corte e il Cortegiano*, vol. I: *La scena del testo* (Rome: 1980) 191–200; Arbizzoni G., *L'ordine e la persuasione. Pietro Bembo personaggio nel Cortegiano* (Urbino: 1983); Hager A. "Castiglione's Bembo, yoking eros and thanatos by containment in book four of *Il libro del cortegiano*", *Canadian Journal of Italian Studies* 16 (1993) 33–47; Scarpati Cl. – Motta U., "Il Bembo del Castiglione", in Morgana S. – Piotti M. – Prada M. (eds.), *Prose della volgare lingua di Pietro Bembo* (Milano: 2000) 443–491.

<sup>2</sup> The other main characters intervening in the discussion are count Ludovico di Canossa on the courtier (Book I), Federico Fregoso on the practical implementation of the ideal (Book II), Bibbiena on the various types of *facezie* (book II), Giuliano de' Medici on the *donna di palazzo* (Book III), Ottaviano Fregoso on the relationship between the courtier and the ruler (Book IV).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Baldassare Castiglione, *Il libro del cortegiano con una scelta delle Opere minori*, ed. B. Maier (Turin: 1964) 512–542; all quotes from the *vulgata* of *The Courtier*, unless indicated otherwise, are from this edition. For the second draft of *The Courtier*, see *La seconda redazione del Cortegiano*, ed. G. Ghinassi (Florence: 1968).

for instance to the *facezie* (II, 45–89) or to the *donna di palazzo* (III, 4–59).<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, the reader will find it hard not to notice that on several occasions, Bembo is rather discreet, even surprisingly discreet, given the topics of conversation. It may strike as something of a surprise, given his credentials as a humanist, a scholar and an advocate of the cause of vernacular literature, that he does not intervene in the discussion on the *questione della lingua* (in which the views held by Bembo are defended by Federico Fregoso),<sup>5</sup> nor on the role the *trecentisti* might play in it. Only on one occasion does he quote a poem by Petrarch. On the basis of this bare textual evidence, there does not seem to be very much of a ‘Petrarchist’ Bembo in *The Courtier*.

Appearances may not always be deceptive, but in this case they are. From this and from various other points of view, Bembo is beyond any doubt the most important and most intriguing character in *The Courtier*, figuring at the heart of a castle of crossed destinies *di calviniana memoria*. Bembo’s performance in *The Courtier* is inextricably linked to his importance as a historical figure; life and times of Pietro Bembo are closely connected with the life and times of Baldassare Castiglione, in particular it is hard (to say the least) to separate the stages in the making of *The Courtier* from the development of Bembo’s œuvre and career.<sup>6</sup> This means, for a start, that Bembo’s appearance

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. respectively 259–321 and 340–423. It may be noted, though, that Bembo is only rarely interrupted during his address, whereas the parts dedicated to other topics assume a much more dialogical character; in particular Giuliano de’ Medici is frequently interrupted during his expositions on the *donna di palazzo*, and the chapters dedicated to this topic resemble more a lively discussion than an actual exposition.

<sup>5</sup> In the debate on language (*questione della lingua*), Castiglione and Bembo held notoriously different views, but in their dialogues both chose to voice their differences of opinion through other characters (Federico Fregoso and Ludovico di Canossa in *The Courtier*, Carlo Bembo and Calmeta in the *Prose della volgar lingua*). The second draft of *The Courtier* contains the announcement of a further debate on language in which Bembo would have taken up the defence of his ideas, but the next day this debate does not take place (I, 39; *La seconda redazione del Cortegiano* 54).

<sup>6</sup> In fact, one of the most intriguing aspects of the complex history of the making of *The Courtier* has to do with the bearings of the contacts between Castiglione and Bembo on this making; the history of *The Courtier* and that of the *Prose della volgar lingua* are intertwined in many—and sometimes ironic—ways. On the making of *The Courtier*, also with regard to Castiglione’s views on language, see, apart from *La seconda redazione del Cortegiano*, Motta U., *Castiglione e il mito di Urbino. Studi sulla elaborazione del Cortegiano* (Milano: 2003); Quondam A., ‘Questo povero Cortegiano’. *Castiglione, il libro, la storia* (Roma: 2000); Guidi J., “Reformulations de l’idéologie aristocratique au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Les différentes rédactions et la fortune du *Courtisan*”, *Réécritures, I–II. Commentaires, parodies, variations dans la littérature italienne de la Renaissance*

in *The Courtier* is at the intersection of different historical perspectives: the perspective of the characters of 1507, when the conversations reported in the book are said to have taken place, and the perspective of the narrator, some twenty years later (somewhere between 1524 and 1527).<sup>7</sup> From the point of view of the dramatic fiction of *The Courtier*, Bembo is a thirty-seven year old intellectual widely known for the *edizioni aldine* of Petrarch and Dante,<sup>8</sup> and especially for the *Asolani*,<sup>9</sup> as well as for his lyrical poetry;<sup>10</sup> the point of view of the narrator's introduction, instead, is contemporary to the Bembo of the third decade of the 16th century—the Bembo who has just published his *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525) and is about to publish the *Rime* as well as the second edition of the *Asolani* (1530).

All in all, Bembo's appearance in *The Courtier* meets all conditions to turn into an intriguing performance, packed with meanings and implications that may and do have bearings on his Petrarchism—on its development, its various dimensions, but also on its broader cultural implications as well as on its position within the context of the court and the profile of the ideal courtier.

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(Paris: 1984) I, 121–184. On the relationship between Bembo and Castiglione with regard to their ideas on language, see also Senior D., “Il rapporto tra Bembo e Castiglione sulla base della ‘questione della lingua’”, *Rivista di Studi Italiani* 17/1 (1991) 145–164.

<sup>7</sup> Castiglione finishes the transcription of the third draft of *The Courtier* (the so-called *codice Laurenziano*) in May 1524. During his stay in Spain, he makes numerous changes to the text, entrusting then Bembo and Ramusio with the manuscript in the spring of 1527. Later on, in the same year, he writes the *lettera dedicatoria* to Monsignor Da Silva. After a last stylistic and linguistic revision by Giovan Francesco Valerio, the printed edition by Aldo Manuzio is ready in April 1528. On the making of *The Courtier*, see note 6.

<sup>8</sup> The *Aldine* were published respectively in 1501 and in 1502; in both editions is already evident the philological approach to vernacular poetry that constitutes the cornerstone of Bembo's *classicismo volgare*. On the making of the *Aldina* edition of Petrarch, see Frasso G., “Il Petrarca aldino del 1501”, *Vestigia. Studi in onore di Giuseppe Billanovich* (Rome: 1984) I, 315–335.

<sup>9</sup> The first edition dates back to 1505, less than two years before the conversations reported in *The Courtier* are said to have taken place. For more details on the *Asolani*, see Dilemmi G., “Storia degli Asolani”, in Pietro Bembo, *Gli Asolani*, ed. Giorgio Dilemmi (Florence: 1991) xxxvii–cxx.

<sup>10</sup> The first edition of Bembo's *Rime* was published in 1530, but some of his poetry in vernacular was widely known already at the beginning of the century; the volume of the *Asolani* contains many poems, and during his stay in Urbino Bembo publishes the *Stanze*, a eulogy of love in *ottava rima*, and *Alma cortese*, a long *canzone* written in 1507, dedicated to the memory of his brother Carlo, deceased in 1503. For more details, see Dionisotti C., “Introduzione”, in Pietro Bembo, *Prose e rime*, ed. C. Dionisotti (Turin: 1966) 9–56; Mazzacurati G.C., “Pietro Bembo”, *Storia della cultura veneta*, vol. III/2 (Vicenza: 1980) 15–21.

*Castiglione's Bembo silent and silenced*

As has already been pointed out, apart from his discourse on love in Book IV of *The Courtier*, Bembo's interventions are sporadic, marginal, or simply non-existent. His silence is at times as surprising as it is eloquent. When taking a closer look at Bembo's sporadic interventions in the first three books, the first thing one notices is that Bembo is not just silent, but sometimes even *silenced* by the other characters.

In the first chapters of book I, various members of the party propose a topic for their conversation. When Ottaviano Fregoso voices his puzzlement about the paradoxal bittersweet effects of love (*dolci sdegni*; I, 10), Bembo immediately takes advantage of the situation and proposes a conversation about love—more precisely about whether the pain is greater when it is caused by the lover himself or by the beloved.<sup>11</sup> But the others immediately reject Bembo's idea, as if they are wary that the author of *Asolani* (a book all the others seem to know, as can be inferred from an allusion in book IV)<sup>12</sup> might drag them into a lengthy, *Asolani*-like dispute on the contradictory experiences of love. And on Bembo's part the rest is silence—at least for the time being.

After the debate on the ideal courtier has been opened, Bembo is silenced on another occasion. When discussing the importance for the courtier of being trained in *lettere*, he sets about to compare the relationship between *armi* and *lettere* to the relationship between body and soul, but Ludovico di Canossa interrupts him with the argument that on matters like this, his cannot but be far too partial an opinion.<sup>13</sup> Bembo is thus silenced twice in the course of Book I of *The Courtier*, and it seems fair to suspect that he is silenced precisely because of his reputation as a *uomo di lettere*, an expert in love theory, in vernacular love poetry, and in the vernacular love poet *par excellence*, Petrarch. Eventually, Bembo throws in the towel, sufficing with clos-

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano* I, 11, 97–99.

<sup>12</sup> 'Disse messer Pietro: "Veramente, Signora, avendo io da parlar di questa materia, bisognariami andar a domandar consiglio allo Eremita del mio Lavinello"' (Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano* IV, 50, 513). In the second draft of *The Courtier*, the *Asolani* are mentioned by Camillo Paleotto (III, 105, in *La seconda redazione* 299).

<sup>13</sup> 'Ma non voglio, messer Pietro, che voi di tal causa siate giudice, perché sareste troppo sospetto ad una delle parti' (Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano* I, 45, 164–166).

ing the discussion on *armi* and *lettere* by quoting a poem by Petrarch<sup>14</sup>—and it is hard not to see in this gesture some kind of self-irony.

From now on, Bembo intervenes only sporadically in the conversations. His interventions in Book II can be considered of secondary importance, not to say marginal or even anecdotal.<sup>15</sup> It may come especially as a surprise that Bembo is silent during the whole of Book III, as it contains the lengthy dispute on the *donna di palazzo* and on love, a dispute with many bearings on his *Asolani*. This silence seems to suggest that Bembo considers the discussion as it is evolving of little interest bordering on the irrelevant with regard to his own ideas on love and poetry—as if, as far as he was concerned, the participants in the debate miss the point. Maybe the shrewd Bembo is waiting for the right moment to intervene. However, for the reader who considers the overall economy of the book, Bembo's silence is a strong gesture suggesting that his Petrarchan scholarship, his ideas about love and poetry, as far as he is concerned, have little to do with the discussion as it is evolving. If he, his writings, his ideas do have a place in the discussion on the ideal courtier, it is certainly not at this stage of the conversation—or at least, that is what his silence seems to suggest.

The proof that Bembo is not merely present, but that he follows the discussion with great care, is that he does not really ignore what has been said and done. In book IV, Bembo gives proof of a tenacious memory, since he immediately links a remark by Pallavicino on love as a source of pain and sorrow, and thus a sign of imperfection (IV, 49) to Ottaviano Fregoso's reference to the *dolci sdegni* at the beginning of the book (I, 10), alluding to the possibility of 'amori che son dolci senza amaritudine'.<sup>16</sup>

At this stage of the discussion, after having debated the relationship between the courtier and the ruler, the whole party is in need of a solution to the apparent contradiction between love as a necessary requisite of the courtier and his age (which, given his wisdom and authority, will be rather mature, even advanced). Bembo really understands that this is his chance, he seizes the momentum, promising

<sup>14</sup> *Giunto Alessandro a la famosa tomba* (*Canzoniere* 187, of which Bembo quotes the first quatrain).

<sup>15</sup> See for instance the comment on fashion and clothing in Lombardy (Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano* II, 27, 232), and his intervention on the florentines (II, 52, 270–272).

<sup>16</sup> Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano* IV, 50, 512.



not only a solution to this paradox, but also a discourse on genuine happiness through love. He responds to the prompt but not without hedging a bit: he refers to Lavinello's conversation with the *romito*, in book III of the *Asolani*<sup>17</sup>—as if he intended to point out to his public, initially so unwilling to accept his suggestions, that they would simply have to consult his *Asolani* to find all the elucidations they needed. However, after thus teasing his audience, he begins his address to the party.<sup>18</sup>

*Bembo's discourses on love*

Bembo's discourse at the end of book IV not only constitutes, as has already been stressed, his main contribution to the fictional conversations reported in *The Courtier*, but reading this discourse also implies unravelling the various layers of meaning, produced by the different perspectives from which Bembo's discourse might be envisaged. A reading of these chapters (IV, 50–70) requires for instance that we take into account the position of Bembo's discourse within *The Courtier*, the relations between this discourse and his other writings, and—in a more specific way—the bearings of Bembo's discourse in *The Courtier* on the nature of his Petrarchism and its impact on the literature and culture of the *Cinquecento*.

<sup>17</sup> Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano* IV, 50, 513.

<sup>18</sup> The link between Bembo's (deliberate or imposed) silence and his triumphal intervention in book IV is indirectly confirmed by the *seconda redazione* of *The Courtier*: in the second draft, Bembo's discourse on love is more fragmented, it does not yet occupy the same crucial position at the end of the whole book, and Bembo's interventions in the course of the conversations are more frequent and longer. For his discourse on love in the second draft, see *La seconda redazione* 301–302 and 306–314 (III, 106, 113–118). In general, the Bembo of the third draft is definitely less involved in the 'andamento contingente della conversazione', much to the advantage of the 'aura carismatica che doveva avvolgere il gran finale' (Dilemmi, "Il Bembo 'cortegiano'" 197). For a convenient survey of the differences between Bembo's performance in the second and third draft of *The Courtier*, see Scarpati – Motta, "Il Bembo del Castiglione" 455–468. The differences between Bembo's rhetorical moves in the second draft and those in the third draft of *The Courtier* are analysed by Arbizzoni, *L'ordine e la persuasione* 8–13.

*Bembo's discourse within the framework of The Courtier*

It is noteworthy that the nature of Bembo's long intervention is directly tied to his silence during book III—in fact, having read book IV of *The Courtier*, it is hard not to see Bembo's silence in book III as all the more eloquent. By refraining from intervening in the discussions on the *donna di palazzo*, Bembo seems to suggest that his competence in the fields of love, love theory, vernacular love poetry, as well as his Petrarch reading and scholarship have not so much to do with a body of precepts, but should be seen within the framework of a broader notion on love, implying also different emotional experiences and social practices of love. It seems as if Bembo waited for the right moment to organize his ideas on love in a coherent intervention, built on more solid theoretical and conceptual grounds.<sup>19</sup>

In the light of his first, aborted interventions, then, Bembo's final address may also be considered as the outcome of a process of self-evaluation, or even as an act of submission to the context of the courtly conversation: he may not be allowed to occupy the whole floor with his initial proposal for a conversation entirely devoted to love, but it is possible to envisage a specific contribution on his part, within the general framework of the conversation as it had been settled in the beginning of book I, to the image of the ideal courtier. From his initial silencing to his final address to the party, culminating in what Antonio Stäuble has rightly called an «inno all'amore»,<sup>20</sup> Bembo's role in *The Courtier* signals as it were an evolution from love as a social and courtly category (i.e. as a topic for a mundane, playful conversation at the court) towards love as a spiritual and ethical category, fit to become the completion of the courtier's *mission statement*. Within the global picture of the *cortegiana*, Bembo's neoplatonist Petrarchism supplies the grounding principles of the spiritual dimension of the courtier.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The 'systematical' and 'theoretical' character of Bembo's discourse has been stressed by many a critic (see, for instance, Arbizzoni, *L'ordine e la persuasione* 25).

<sup>20</sup> See Stäuble A., "L'inno all'amore nel *Cortegiano* (IV, 70)", in *Le sirene eterne. Studi sull'eredità classica e biblica nella letteratura italiana* (Ravenna: 1986) 117–53.

<sup>21</sup> On the role of Bembo's discourse in the interplay of paradoxes central to Castiglione's dialogue, see the important remarks by Carlo Ossola in *Dal 'cortegiano' all'uomo di mondo'. Storia di un libro e di un modello sociale* (Turin: 1988) 54–55.

But within the context of book IV of *The Courtier*, Bembo's discourse on love becomes charged with important political implications. In fact, the immediate occasion for Bembo's intervention is a deadlock in Ottaviano Fregoso's definition of the relationship between courtier and prince: on the one hand, the courtier's ethical obligation to maintain the prince on the path of virtue supposes an authority that comes only with a mature age; on the other hand, it is indispensable for the courtier to love—but love in a mature age means that the courtier exposes itself to the risk of becoming a *senex amans*. Therefore, both requirements seem incompatible. Bembo's discourse starts off as a concrete answer to this paradox by defining love as a spectrum of experiences ranging from sensual love to the contemplation of divine beauty, but at the same time the solution he proposes reorganizes his ideas on love into a broader system, compounding ethical, social and political implications.

In the course of *The Courtier*, various characters allude at the coming of a new generation of *grandi sovrani* (Francis I King of France, Henry VIII King of England, Charles V the Holy Roman Emperor),<sup>22</sup> a generation that, by the time *The Courtier* reached its third draft (1524) and was published (1528), dominated the political scene of Europe. In the light of these allusions, and in the light of the *ubi sunt* motives present in the frame of *The Courtier*, it is tempting to see Bembo's definition of love as a cosmic force creating a hierarchical order in the universe, and as a spiritual and mystical practice of admiration of God as a political allegory—that may be applied to any ruler in 1507, but that is all the more appropriate when it is read as the announcement of the coming of a new age, in which princes will be ousted from their courts and supplanted by kings and emperors—*grandi sovrani* who later will obtain a god-like allure.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano* I, 42, 158 (Monsignor d'Angoulême, the future Francis I, King of France), and IV, 38, 495–496 (Francis I, Henry VIII King of England, Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor).

<sup>23</sup> It is tempting to see Bembo's address as an ideology *prêt-à-porter* for the generation of *grandi sovrani*, predating by a century the figure of the *roi-soleil*. Petrarchism at the court of Elizabeth I is a suggestive example of how divinization and adoration of the beloved as « paragon of all virtues » may acquire political meanings (cf. Forster L.W., "The Political Petrarchism of the Virgin Queen", in *The Icy Fire. Five studies in European Petrarchism* (Cambridge: 1969) 122–147. It should be stressed, however, that earlier in book IV Bembo had praised the republic (Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano* IV, 20, 471).

*Bembo's discourse in The Courtier and the  
writings of the historical Bembo*

In order to verify how and to what extent Bembo's discourse in *The Courtier* interacts with the meanings of the writings of the historical Bembo, it seems only natural to consider the *Asolani* as the first and foremost point of reference. But the relation with the *Asolani* is rather intricate, and goes well beyond some broad similarities in content or in structure which one can spot at first sight.<sup>24</sup> Nor should one forget that besides the *Asolani* other writings too contribute to the image of the Bembo of 1507.<sup>25</sup>

When comparing the *Asolani* with Bembo's performance in *The Courtier*, some striking differences are immediately apparent. In some aspects, Bembo's discourse in *The Courtier* signals even far-reaching changes to what statements are made in the *Asolani*. It can be argued that the conversations in the *Asolani* juxtapose different opinions on (and experiences of) love, closely tied to (sometimes radical, and radically different) existential options. The reader, however, remains with the impression that the various points of view do not really interact: the statements by the characters do not always exclude each other, but neither do they really interact with each other, leaving the reader therefore without any sense of an ending. A telling example in this respect is the third book of the *Asolani*: Lavinello's remarks—and it was he who to a limited extent tried to organize Perottino's and Gismondo's views in a coherent scheme, are followed by the final discourse of the hermit, who radically rejects all kinds of *amor terreno*, whether happy or unhappy. His is a radical address, that can hardly be seen as an actual and valuable 'conclusion' of the dispute, nor as the 'solution' advocated by the extradiegetic narrator of the *Asolani*.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> The concepts used by the three characters of the *Asolani* in their expositions present various similarities to those used by Bembo in *The Courtier*; on a structural level, it is noteworthy that the three books of the *Asolani* and Bembo's address in *The Courtier* culminate in a lyrical paean to a particular experience of love (or, in the case of Perottino, in an advice not to engage in any experience of love), furthermore, Bembo's discourse in *The Courtier*, just as Lavinello's in book III of the *Asolani*, is charged with the responsibility of resolving a paradox.

<sup>25</sup> Bembo's stay in Urbino is inextricably linked to the *Stanze*, recited precisely during the Carnival of 1507—that is, only weeks after the alleged conversations of *The Courtier*. During the same period he writes many poems, and collects them around 1510 in a book dedicated to Elisabetta Gonzaga, a project he eventually abandons.

<sup>26</sup> On the differences between the *princeps* of 1505 and the second edition of 1530,

Bembo's discourse in *The Courtier* is of a quite different nature, since he assumes the hypothesis of some kind of continuity between *amor terreno* and *amor divino*. The most obvious expression of this continuity is the role of the body as an 'interface'—more precisely the close relationship between the external, physical beauty of the body and the interior beauty or goodness of the soul.<sup>27</sup> Another sign of the distance separating Bembo's discourse from the third book of the *Asolani* is the indulgence vis-à-vis physical love in youth (since man at a younger age is overwhelmed by the force of the senses, his passionate love is excusable), and the elimination of the overall and rigid *contemptus mundi* championed by the hermit.<sup>28</sup> Eventually, in Bembo's discourse in *The Courtier*, Gismondo's, Lavinello's and even parts of the hermit's addresses on love are made to fit each other:

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see Giorgio Dilemmi's observations in *Gli Asolani* (note 9), lxvi–cxv, as well as Floriani P., "Primo petrarchismo bembesco", in *Bembo e Castiglione. Studi sul classicismo del Cinquecento* (Rome: 1976) 75–98. The second edition of the *Asolani* stands out for the high number of minor linguistic and stylistic interventions, adapting the text to the options advocated in the *Prose della volgar lingua*. In the second edition a substantial number of poems and minor prose passages are eliminated, and there are no substantial additions, with the sole exception of the long excerpt on the difference between *amore* and *desiderio* in the hermit's discourse (III, 13–14, in *Gli Asolani* 332–333). Since many of the removed extracts contained contingent details and personal effusions, the second edition is marked by a shift towards a more 'disembodied' discourse, concentrated on the 'essence' of the discussion. It is noteworthy that in the shift from the second to the third draft of *The Courtier*, Bembo's performance undergoes a similar change: his 'marginal' interventions in the course of the book are less frequent, and his address in book IV is a dense and coherent discourse, with few interruptions by other characters.

<sup>27</sup> '[D]ico che da Dio nasce la bellezza ed è come circolo di cui la bontà è il centro; e però come non po essere circolo senza centro, non po esser bellezza senza bontà; onde rare volte mala anima abita bel corpo e perciò la bellezza estrinseca è vero segno della bontà intrinseca e nei corpi è impressa quella grazia più e meno quasi per un carattere dell'anima, per lo quale essa estrinsecamente è conosciuta, come negli alberi, ne' quali la bellezza de' fiori fa testimonio della bontà dei frutti; e questo medesimo interviene nei corpi, come si vede che i fisionomi al volto conoscono spesso i costumi e talora i pensieri degli omini' (Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano* IV, 57, 522); 'In somma, ad ogni cosa dà supremo ornamento questa graziosa e sacra bellezza; e dir si po che 'l bono e 'l bello a qualche modo siano una medesima cosa, e massimamente nei corpi umani; della bellezza de' quali la più propinqua causa estimo io che sia la bellezza dell'anima che, come partecipe di quella vera bellezza divina, illustra e fa bello ciò che ella tocca, e specialmente se quel corpo ov'ella abita non è di così vil materia, che ella non possa imprimergli la sua qualità' (IV, 59, 524–525).

<sup>28</sup> In *The Courtier*, Bembo is tolerant towards sensual love, because it is seen as inevitable for the young courtier (Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano* IV, 61); in the *Asolani*, instead, the hermit preaches a complete separation of body and soul, identifying the *vera bellezza* only with the soul.

sensual love, rational love and divine love are seen as grades in a hierarchical process of transformation and ascent, in which the various grades are not mutually exclusive (as they were in the hermit's lecture in book III of the *Asolani*), but in which experiences on a lower level (e.g. the bodily experience) may and should enhance one's ability to reach a higher level (e.g. the level of soul). Admiration for the physical beauty of the body is justified only inasmuch as its beauty is put into relation with the goodness of the soul. A striking example is that of the kiss, described as a means of reaching a union of souls through a bodily act.<sup>29</sup> For the lovers, the kiss is a means to retrace backwards (from effect to cause) the course of divine love engulfing all things and beings; and in this way the lover may ascend his stairway to heaven, eventually reaching the contemplation of the *bellezza divina* and the *somma bontà* evoked in the final part of Bembo's address.<sup>30</sup>

Bembo's discourse in *The Courtier* rectifies what readers of the *Asolani* might view as puzzling aspects, or even considerable flaws of the book. The early Petrarchism of the *Asolani* highlights the existence of diverging and contrasting experiences of love, voicing them through numerous examples of vernacular love poetry, but eventually the

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<sup>29</sup> 'Ed acciò che ancor meglio conosciate che l'amor razionale è più felice che 'l sensuale, dico che le medesime cose nel sensuale si debbeno talor negare e nel razionale concedere, perché in questo son disonesti, ed in quello onesti; però la donna, per compiacere il suo amante bono, oltre il concedergli i risi piacevoli, i ragionamenti domestici e secreti, il motteggiare, scherzare, toccar la mano, po venir ancor ragionevolmente senza biasimo insin al bacio, il che nell'amor sensuale, secondo le regule del signor Magnifico, non è licito; perché, per esser il bacio congiungimento e del corpo e dell'anima, pericolo è che l'amante sensuale non inclini più alla parte del corpo che a quella dell'anima, ma l'amante razionale conosce che, ancora che la bocca sia parte del corpo, nientedimeno per quella si dà esito alle parole che sono interpreti dell'anima, ed a quello intrinseco anelito che si chiama pur esso ancor anima; e perciò si diletta d'unir la sua bocca con quella della donna amata col bacio, non per moversi a desiderio alcuno disonesto, ma perché sente che quello legame è un aprir l'adito alle anime, che tratte dal desiderio l'una dell'altra si transfundano alternamente ancor l'una nel corpo dell'altra e talmente si mescolino insieme che ognun di loro abbia due anime, ed una sola di quelle due così composta regga quasi dui corpi' (Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano* IV, 64, 530–531).

<sup>30</sup> 'che dolce fiamma, che incendio suave creder si dee che sia quello, che nasce dal fonte della suprema e vera bellezza! che è principio d'ogni altra bellezza, che mai non cresce né scema; sempre bella e per se medesima, tanto in una parte, quanto nell'altra, semplicissima; a se stessa solamente simile, e di niuna altra partecipe; ma talmente bella, che tutte le altre cose belle son belle perché da lei partecipan la sua bellezza. Questa è quella bellezza indistinta dalla somma bontà, che con la sua luce chiama e tira a sé tutte le cose' (Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano* IV, 69, 538).

reactions elaborated in book III to the contrasts between the *noie* and the *goie* of love as they have been evoked in books I and II may leave the reader somewhat bewildered, in particular because of the contrast between Lavinello's rather balanced solution and the hermit's more radical address. In *The Courtier*, instead, various experiences of and opinions on love are embedded in a *continuum* that redeems physical love and courtly love through their possible relationship with rational and celestial love. Another interesting aspect is that the *continuum* is made possible precisely by the use of what could be termed as 'textbook' neoplatonic ideas (love as desire of beauty; *i gradi dell'amore*, as described by Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, and others);<sup>31</sup> some of these concepts do appear also in book III of the *Asolani*, but in a far less elaborated and coherent way.<sup>32</sup>

At this point, Bembo's discourse in *The Courtier* can indeed be considered as a carefully conceived discursive device, capable of negotiating differences between various facets of Bembo's writing and reputation. Bembo's discourse in book IV reconciles various facets of the Bembo of 1507. It contains an explicit and coherent picture of the neoplatonic ingredients of his early Petrarchism explicit, offering at the same time a common ground for the various instances and possible outcomes of this early Petrarchism. The need for a kind of compromise formula may have been enhanced by the identification of Bembo with Gismondo, charged with defending the joys of love,<sup>33</sup> as well as by the *Stanze*, Bembo's most successful work of poetry connected to his stay in Urbino, in which references to natural love and courtly love are interlaced with some playful touches of neoplatonism.<sup>34</sup> Truthful to the dramatic fiction of *The Courtier*, Bembo's performance is certainly in line with his literary renown in 1507, yet at the same time it contains substantial allusions to (as well as significant silences on) the evolution of Bembo's poetics in the years following his departure from Urbino, in particular with regard to the future developments of his Petrarchism.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano* IV, 64–68, with the grades of abstract particular beauty, universal beauty, angelic beauty, particular intellect and universal (divine) intellect, grades Guido Arbizzoni has compared to Pico della Mirandola's *Commento* on the canzone by Benivieni (Arbizzoni, *L'ordine e la persuasione* 37–40).

<sup>32</sup> On neoplatonism in the *Asolani*, see Berra C., *La scrittura degli Asolani di Pietro Bembo* (Florence: 1996) 86–94, 204–219, and 237–240.

<sup>33</sup> This identification is based on Gismondo's age, mentioned in II, 17 (see *Gli Asolani* 148 (for the 1505 edition) and 283 (for the 1530 edition).

<sup>34</sup> See for instance the *ottave* 19–20 (Bembo, "Stanze", *Prose e rime* 658–659).



*The Courtier and the nature and impact of Bembo's Petrarchism*

Castiglione has staged a neoplatonic Bembo whose views are in keeping with many a passage in book III of the *Asolani*, yet other aspects of Bembo's discourse may be said to foreshadow already the Bembo of the years to come, inclined to inject Aristotelean positions into his initial neoplatonism. The Bembo of *The Courtier* emphasizes the importance of external beauty (*bellezza estrinseca*), stresses the strong connection between body and soul, and shows himself to be indulgent towards the *rationale* of age and bodily pleasure; the Bembo of *The Courtier* is willing to accept that the visible world and actual human behaviour may have reasons of their own, and may be judged by relatively autonomous standards, even if this autonomy is a very limited one—the realm of the visible being eventually subordinate to the realm of the invisible. To some extent, Bembo's intervention in book IV of *The Courtier* can be said to be compatible with the subsequent development of his poetics and poetry: the poetics of the *De imitatione*, in which Bembo refuses the innate nature of the idea of beauty as such, and stresses the importance of training, of literary models, of acquiring a stylistic and linguistic *habitus* through the absorption of these models;<sup>35</sup> the poetics of the *Prose della volgar lingua*, in which style, language and prosody are subject to regulation—not in the sense of a mere body of precepts, but in the sense of a regulative hypothesis based on specific models (the dyad Petrarch-Boccaccio), models whose *rationale* is open to analysis and may be the object of training and rational insight;<sup>36</sup> the poetry of his *Rime*,

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola – Pietro Bembo, *Le epistole De imitatione*, ed. G. Santangelo (Florence: 1954).

<sup>36</sup> This conviction is expressed by Bembo in a short intervention in book II on the relationship between natural genius (*ingegno*) and skills acquired through training and teaching (*arte*) (Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano* II, 43, 257). It must be emphasized, however, that Bembo in 1528, when he had just published his *Prose della volgar lingua*, considered the way Castiglione had represented him in book IV as too much determined by his early neoplatonism, and that, in the light of the theses elaborated in the *Prose*, the discourse attributed to him in *The Courtier* put far too much stress on the importance of love as a source of divine inspiration. This is probably the reason why Bembo decided to delete some references to love as an *ottimo maestro*, a source not only of poetical inspiration but of all sorts of ennobling effects (one passage is in II, 20 (*Gli Asolani* 153), the other is in II, 31, 174–175). It is noteworthy that in the second edition of the *Asolani* Bembo deletes the reference to the kiss as contact between two souls in Gismondo's discourse (II, 32, 176), as if he considered this passage too similar to the passage on the kiss attributed to him in *The Courtier* (Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano* IV, 64, 530–531).



first published in 1530, voicing a far wider range of experiences of love than that of the *amore celeste*. Yet at the same time it can not pass unnoticed that these allusions to the necessities of dealing with concrete reality, are situated at the 'lower' levels of Bembo's hierarchy, and that eventually the emphasis is on the experience of celestial love and on the divine inspiration it procures—in short, on ideas associated first of all with the Bembo of the *Asolani*, and far less with those of Bembo of the *Prose*. Castiglione acknowledges some aspects of the evolutions Bembo's poetics went through, yet subordinates them to the earlier Bembo, inverting so to speak the hierarchical order between both phases in his poetics.

Eventually, it could be argued that Bembo's address at the end of *The Courtier* negotiates a framework for the development of Petrarchism as an aesthetic programme conceivable not just in terms of style and language, but also in terms of representations of beauty, and in terms of ways of responding to beauty, from a psychological, spiritual and social point of view. Within this framework, the reflection on themes such as love and beauty may deal with very different experiences, ranging from sensual passion to more idealized forms of courtly love, and may eventually trigger some form of *sacro furor amoroso*,<sup>37</sup> resulting in an ecstatic eulogy of divine love, as actually happens in Bembo's address. In a similar way, Petrarchism can be understood as a poetical programme allowing for the voicing of different experiences of beauty and love, with their possible and often interwoven social, ethical, religious and philosophical implications, ranging from the impetus of the *giovenili voglie* to the ennobling force of virtuous love, from moments of repentance to periodical relapses, culminating eventually (but not necessarily) in some kind of *Canzone alla vergine*.<sup>38</sup> The overlapping of and interaction between different

<sup>37</sup> These are the terms used by Bembo himself to qualify the divine source of inspiration of the last part of his address ('Signori,—suggiunse,—io ho detto quello che 'l sacro furor amoroso improvvisamente m'ha dettato; ora che par che più non m'aspiri, non saprei che dire', Castiglione, *Il libro del Cortegiano* IV, 71, 541–542).

<sup>38</sup> On narrative patterns in the *Canzoniere*, and on their evolution through the various phases of the making of the book, see Santagata M., *I frammenti dell'anima. Storia e racconto nel Canzoniere del Petrarca* (Bologna: 1992). Bembo's *edizione aldina* of 1501 still respects the order of the *Canzoniere*, as well as some macrostructural features (e.g. the bipartition), and Bembo's *Rime* present some echoes of these structural patterns. On the whole, 16th-century Petrarchism will pay but little attention to the *Canzoniere* as a carefully structured text, yet it will inherit the variety of experiences of love voiced in Petrarch's poetry.

experiences of love, the superimposition of different images of beauty within a more or less hierarchically ordered *continuum* of experiences is in line with the representations of female beauty in writing and in painting in the years or decades contemporary to *The Courtier*,<sup>39</sup> in particular with the intertwining of sacred and temporal representations of beauty, and with the intertwining of sacred and temporal contexts in which these representations circulate. In short, Bembo's address in *The Courtier* is tantamount to a shrewdly organized and carefully formulated programme: by letting Bembo conclude the final draft of *The Courtier* with a discourse on love, Castiglione gives Bembo's neoplatonic Petrarchism the status of an 'ideologia ispiratrice fondamentale'<sup>40</sup> of the court as an ideal social and institutional space, yet at the same time this ideology is rooted in the concrete diversity of psychological experience and wordly matters. Eventually, Castiglione seems to suggest that Petrarchism, and its enormous influence in the decades to come, is not just a matter of style and prosody based on an elevated model (as Bembo's *Prose della volgar lingua* might lead to think), nor of purely mystical neoplatonism, but regards a set of divergent and sometimes conflicting spiritual attitudes and social practices. Petrarchism might be a matter of elevated experiences and excellent models, yet as inspiring and important as these may be, they achieve their elevating effects through the variedness, the wordliness and the *consuetudine* of social praxis.

<sup>39</sup> See Elizabeth Cropper's seminal article "On Beautiful Women. Parmigianino, petrarchismo, and the vernacular style", *Art Bulletin* 58/3 (1976) 373–394. See also Rogers M., "The *decorum* of Women's Beauty. Trissino, Firenzuola, Luigini and the Representation of Women in Sixteenth-Century Painting", *Renaissance Studies* 2/1 (1988) 47–87.

<sup>40</sup> Floriani, "Dall'amor cortese all'amor divino", in *Bembo e Castiglione* 183.

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## AN UNUSUAL BIOGRAPHY: CARDANO'S HOROSCOPE OF PETRARCH\*

Dóra Bobory

Astrology—before a series of challenges was raised in the 16th and 17th centuries to the established cosmological system,<sup>1</sup> resulting in a complete change of worldview<sup>2</sup>—was still widely accepted in the 16th century, the period on which this study will focus. The idea that the heavens were incorruptible, while the sublunary region, that of human beings, was corruptible and subject to influences deriving from the heavenly bodies,<sup>3</sup> was Aristotelian in origin. Yet, according to some Renaissance scholars,<sup>4</sup> it did not contradict the Christian view of a benevolent God, since astrology was perceived as a manifestation of His providence and love, which allows people to figure out some of His divine plans and prepare for any changes to come.

Despite the strong concurrence of other divinatory arts, such as chiromancy, metoposcopy, and the interpretation of dreams, astrology still enjoyed the greatest popularity—and also, paradoxically, suffered from the most ferocious attacks<sup>5</sup>—in 15th- and 16th-century Europe in general and Italy in particular. Far from being the superstitious little brother of noble astronomy, a sidetrack in the evolution of

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<sup>1</sup> Grant E., “Were there Significant Differences between Medieval and Early Modern Scholastic Natural Philosophy? The Case for Cosmology”, *Noûs* 18/1 (1984) 5–14.

<sup>2</sup> See some of the best general works on the period preceding the so-called scientific revolution: Mamiani M., *Storia della scienza moderna* (Bari: 1998), and Rossi P., *La nascita della scienza moderna in Europa* (Bari: 1997), now also in English as *The Birth of Modern Science*, transl. C. De Nardi Ipsen (Oxford: 2000).

<sup>3</sup> See the comprehensive article of North J.D., “Celestial Influence—the Major Premiss of Astrology”, in Zambelli P. (ed.), *‘Astrologi hallucinati’ Stars and the End of the World in Luther’s Time* (Berlin-New York: 1986) 45–100.

<sup>4</sup> See Ficino Marsilio, *De vita triplici*, ed. C.V. Kaske – J.R. Clark (Tempe, AZ: 1998), and Bullard M.M., “The Inward Zodiac: A Development in Ficino’s Thought on Astrology”, *Renaissance Quarterly* 43 (1990) 687–708.

<sup>5</sup> Pico della Mirandola Giovanni, *Disputationes adversus astrologiam divinatricem*, ed. E. Garin, 2 vols (Florence: 1946–1952). See also Zambelli P., *L’ambigua natura della magia. Filosofi, streghe, riti nel Rinascimento* (Venice: 1996).

science, or the pastime of bored aristocrats, let alone a simple source of income for poor scholars, astrology was considered to be 'a necessary art for the advantage of people, a useful discipline, a joyful study and divine wisdom'.<sup>6</sup>

These are the words of Gerolamo Cardano, one of the most enthusiastic defenders and promoters of astrology,<sup>7</sup> who held that it was a noble art given to humanity by God Himself and that it was only due to *bad* astrologers that it had lost its good reputation. Cardano was a Milanese physician,<sup>8</sup> a very prolific writer, and a man of universal interests, who dealt with mathematics,<sup>9</sup> moral and natural philosophy,<sup>10</sup> and even mineralogy, contributing to each branch of science. In some cases he performed something really outstanding (in the field of mathematics, for instance, the demonstration of the method for the solution of cubic equations, or a special suspension, designed for the carriage of the Emperor Charles V, the so-called 'joint' of Cardano), while in other cases his role is not easy to define. To simplify the case greatly, Gerolamo Cardano was a very prominent and characteristic example of the Renaissance polymath, dealing with the most diverse things, criticising the ancient authorities yet, while claiming to offer new solutions, still being deeply rooted in ancient and medieval traditions.

From the beginning of his scientific career Cardano cast himself in the very engaging role of the prophet, someone with special abilities to foretell the future. He was aware of the call from readers for prophecies concerning political, economic and social issues, and he understood (as did many of his learned colleagues) that a skilled intellectual could profit from the requirements of the book market.

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<sup>6</sup> Cardano, *Encomium astrologiae*, in *Opera omnia*, 10 vols (Lyons: 1663), V, 727–728: 'Si qua est humanis usibus ars necessaria, disciplinave utilis, aut contemplatio iucunda, vel divina sapientia, Astrologia certe [...] talis est'.

<sup>7</sup> On his astrology, see Grafton A., *Cardano's Cosmos. The Worlds and Works of a Renaissance Astrologer* (Cambridge, MA-London: 1999); Ernst G., "Veritatis amor dulcissimus". Aspetti dell'astrologia di Cardano", in Kefler E. (ed.), *Girolamo Cardano. Philosoph, Naturforscher, Arzt*, Wolfenbütteler Abhandlungen zur Renaissanceforschung 15 (Wiesbaden: 1994) 157–184; and Ochman J., "Il determinismo astrologico di Girolamo Cardano", in *Magia, astrologia e religione nel Rinascimento. Convegno polacco-italiano (Varsavia: 25–27 settembre 1972)* (Breslau-Warsaw-Krakow-Gdansk: 1974) 123–130.

<sup>8</sup> Siraisi N.G., *The Clock and the Mirror. Girolamo Cardano and Renaissance Medicine* (Princeton: 1997).

<sup>9</sup> On his contributions to mathematics, see Maracchia S., *Da Cardano a Galois. Momenti di storia dell'algebra* (Milan: 1978).

<sup>10</sup> Ingegnò A., *Saggio sulla filosofia di Cardano* (Milan: 1980).

Thus in his early years he also published a book<sup>11</sup> containing prognostications<sup>12</sup> concerning both major and minor events to come in the period between 1534 and 1550, thus taking part in a very popular tradition, one that—despite the papal bulls against judicial astrology—was to flourish until the 18th century. Later, however, in his conscious self-fashioning,<sup>13</sup> he felt that this early work did not reflect that image of a serious scholar—even if it suggested already the image of a prophet and a chosen one with special abilities (as was shown on the cover of the *Pronostico*)<sup>14</sup>—that he intended for posterity; thus he never refers to it in his list of publications.<sup>15</sup>

Renaissance astrology as a system has been subject to the most various interpretations,<sup>16</sup> such as social, religious and philosophical ones, but its value as a historical source has not yet been sufficiently accentuated. In the following, I will make an attempt at delineating the possibilities of understanding horoscopes, and more precisely, the nativity charts of well-known personages, as sources of biographical information. This study will focus on the nativity horoscopes of Francis Petrarch cast by three contemporary Italian astrologers, Gerolamo Cardano, Luca Gaurico and Francesco Giuntini. On the basis of the contextualisation, comparison and analysis of the three genitures—two-dimensional renderings of the planetary positions on the natal sky—I will investigate whether or not they can serve as a study of the reception of Petrarch, and if so, to what degree.

<sup>11</sup> Cardano Gerolamo, *Pronostico* (Venice: 1534–1435).

<sup>12</sup> See Casali E., *Le spie del cielo. Oroscopi, lunari, e almanacchi nell'Italia moderna* (Turin: 2003).

<sup>13</sup> Bobory D., “Being a Chosen One: Self-Consciousness and Self-Fashioning in the Works of Gerolamo Cardano”, in Szende K. – Rasson J.A. – Sebők M. (eds.), *Annual of the Medieval Studies at CEU* 9 (2003) 69–92.

<sup>14</sup> Cardano's popularity as an astrologer in the 17th and 18th centuries becomes clear from the fact that his works—similarly to those of Ptolemy and Aristotle—appear on frontispiece illustrations together with the popular attributes of the practitioner: the astrolabe, the sphere, and so on. Casali E., *Le spie del cielo* 10.

<sup>15</sup> On the interpretation of the lists of his own books, see Maclean I., “Interpreting the *De libris propriis*”, in Baldi M. – Canziani G. (eds.), *Girolamo Cardano. Le opere, le fonti, la vita. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Milano 11–13 Dicembre 1997* (Milan: 1999) 13–33.

<sup>16</sup> See the summary in Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos* 13–15.

*The horoscope as biography*

How can a horoscope provide us with biographical data? Renaissance astrologers worked with a most intricate system of calculations, with a ‘combination of care and carelessness’,<sup>17</sup> which allowed them a respectable freedom of choice. ‘Choice’ is, indeed, a key word both for the understanding of 16th-century astrological practice and for the present investigation. Due to the fact that their calculations were and are often very difficult to follow, and, even more importantly, due to the widely used practice of ‘rectification’ (thus adjusting the time of the horoscope), the interpretation of the positions of planets was highly flexible and subjective. Consequently, the results were often achieved through a series of manipulations both with regard to the original time of the person’s birth (especially if the astrologer did not know it with certainty), and in the process of sketching the geniture. The final version of the horoscope was—rather than the result of pure mathematical computations—a reflection of the astrologer’s or the commissioner’s intention and conviction.<sup>18</sup>

Following this logic, nativity horoscopes can and ought to be read as depositories of contemporary anecdotes, and indeed gossip, about well-known personalities, public figures, artists, literati, emperors, princes, popes, and so on, as well as a form of reception. Indeed, a horoscope always tended to collect, and, in the light of the calculations (however dubious they might have been), explain and contextualise pieces of information, biographical data about the person in question. This is especially valid if the person about whom the horoscope was made was a renowned figure from the past, not a living contemporary of the astrologer: thus the horoscope was retrospective, more like a biography. Horoscopes of still living personalities were often means of (religious) propaganda, as happened in the case of Protestant lead-

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<sup>17</sup> Quinlan-McGrath M., “The Foundation Horoscope(s) for the St. Peter’s Basilica, Rome, 1506: Choosing a Time, Changing the Storia”, *Isis* 92 (2001) 716–741 (esp. 720).

<sup>18</sup> Horoscopes were cast also for buildings and cities. Quinlan-McGrath M., “The Foundation Horoscope(s)” showed how various renowned astrologers, by the way of rectification, were busying themselves in finding the right time for the rebuilding of St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome under Pope Julius II, and correlating it to both the birth of Christ and that of the Pope himself. See also Riggs D., “Was Michelangelo Born under Saturn?”, *Sixteenth Century Journal* 26 (1995) 99–121, another example of conscious manipulations of the person’s horoscope to receive the desired results.

ers, and most importantly, Martin Luther, a case to which I will return in this study later.

The existence of retrospective horoscopes might seem paradoxical, since horoscopes usually were (and today still are) cast to help one orientate oneself in the labyrinth of the future events in one's life, trying to indicate what dangers, misfortunes or fortunes were to be expected, and approximately when. In contrast, genitures of famous (or notorious) characters from the past served other purposes. They were most frequently used as didactic tools accompanying writings on astrological theory, to illustrate certain typical patterns that a practitioner of astrology could encounter while deciphering the message of the stars. Such typical patterns, which the practitioner had to recognise, were, for instance, violent death, physical defects, barrenness, and so on, suggested by particular constellations or planetary aspects. Needless to say, the nativity horoscopes of princes and emperors were most suitable as case studies for any of these, and particularly the pattern of violent death.

Furthermore, these horoscopes served the purpose of demonstrating the strength of astrology and the skill of the astrologer by showing how the stars had the character traits of the person and the events all written in them, and pointing out that a good and learned astrologer, who knew how to speak the language of the stars, was able to foretell the future. Cardano even believed that by knowing where the turning points would be, one could or at least could try to avoid the misfortunes in one's life.<sup>19</sup>

### *Horoscopes as autobiographies: the case of Cardano*

If we accept Anthony Grafton's statement, namely that astrology 'offered a means of understanding one's own character—and not allowing it to become one's destiny',<sup>20</sup> then we see that a horoscope could take another direction, that of an autobiography. This again is best possible to illustrate through the example of Gerolamo Cardano,

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<sup>19</sup> Cardano was convinced that he was a chosen one with the ability to foresee the future, someone especially dear to God since he received admonitions on a daily basis, through dreams and demons, and by the way of a particular insight into astrology as well. See Bobory, "Being a Chosen One" *passim*.

<sup>20</sup> Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos* 190.



who—since his favourite subject and patient was always himself<sup>21</sup>—cast his own horoscope many times,<sup>22</sup> and it is beyond doubt the longest of all.

It is already a well-known fact that Cardano's autobiography, the *De propria vita*,<sup>23</sup> written when the author was already 74 years old, was born from his lengthy explanations attached to his own nativity horoscope.<sup>24</sup> He published his horoscope for the first time in 1543 with predictions concerning his future. However, in the light of later events (for example after the execution of his favourite son, for whom he had foretold a glittering future) he more than once returned to his horoscope, modifying his forecasts, perhaps even correcting earlier calculations to justify the errors (applying 'rectification'), thus falsifying the prophecies, and turning the horoscope into an autobiography. Even structurally speaking, his horoscopes and his autobiography are substantially the same: there are chapters treating his physical appearance and the role of the planets in shaping it, individual chapters dedicated to members of his family, chapters on his enemies and friends, and chapters on his professional difficulties and successes (while this division corresponds also to the various houses in a nativity chart). The final work was written with a thoroughness never seen before.

Gabriel Naudé, who wrote the first biography of Cardano in the middle of the 17th century,<sup>25</sup> criticised the author precisely for his directness, the fact that Cardano shares even the most intimate particulars of his and his family's life with the readers, not thinking of his reputation as a scholar, in revealing often very embarrassing details. However, Cardano's lifelong conviction was that both the readers and he himself could learn from his horoscope and his autobiography because in them one can find examples of both good and bad events in a great number.<sup>26</sup> He also liked to say that truth and

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<sup>21</sup> See Galen A.C.E. van, "Body and Self-Image in the Autobiography of Gerolamo Cardano", in Enenkel K. – de Jong-Crane B. – Liebrechts P. (eds.), *Modelling the Individual. Biography and Portrait in the Renaissance* (Amsterdam-Atlanta, GA: 1998) 133–152, and Siraisi, *The Clock and the Mirror* 6.

<sup>22</sup> In the *Libelli duo* (Nuremberg: 1543), the *Libelli quinque* (Nuremberg: 1547), and the *In Cl. Ptolemaei Pelusiensis IIII de astrorum iudiciis, aut ut vulgo vocant, quadripartitae constructionis libros, commentaria* (Basel: 1554).

<sup>23</sup> Cardano, *De vita propria*, in *Opera omnia* vol. I.

<sup>24</sup> Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos* 125 and 184.

<sup>25</sup> Naudé G., "De Cardano iudicium", in Gerolamo Cardano, *Opera omnia* vol. I.

<sup>26</sup> Cardano, *De vita propria* 15.

the love of truth for him were always above everything else, and when he was not trying to hide the negative things he subscribed to the moralising aspect of astrology.<sup>27</sup>

*The methodology: how to make a geniture?*

In the introduction I pointed out that the complexity of calculations allowed astrologers a respectable freedom in determining the most decisive factors in the patient's horoscope. In order to understand where they could—either by mistake or on purpose—change the whole course of the interpretation of the horoscope, we need to summarise the methodological process that an astrologer most frequently applied.<sup>28</sup>

The Renaissance astrological worldview was geocentric (and remained so even after the establishment of the heliocentric theory) since it reflected the viewpoint and the observations of someone who stood on the Earth looking up at the sky. It observed the positions of seven planets: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Sun, and the Moon in the zodiac (Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto had not been discovered yet). The zodiac was a traditional duodecimal division of the sky, a circle whose inner ring was the so-called ecliptic, that is, the apparent circular path of the Sun. Every zodiacal sign had a fixed place and occupied 30 degrees of the circle each. Furthermore, each planet had two houses, one diurnal and one nocturnal, except the Sun and Moon which had only one house. The planets exercised their greatest influence in their own houses, during the day in their diurnal and during the night in the nocturnal house. In addition, every one of them had a point of climax, that is, *exaltatio*, in another house where their power was particularly great, and a point of depth on the opposite side of the sky where they were the weakest.

A horoscope ('examination of the hour') was the study of the positions (in relation to the zodiacal signs) and the aspects (the positions

<sup>27</sup> Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos* 191–194.

<sup>28</sup> A more detailed description of the astrologer's methodology is provided in the following classical works: Boll F. – Bezold C., *Sternglaube und Sterneutung. Die Geschichte und das Wesen der Astrologie* (Leipzig: 1917); North J., *Horoscopes and History* (London: 1986); Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos* especially Chapter Two, "The Astrologer's Practice" 22–37; Quinlan-McGrath, "The Foundation Horoscope(s)" 718–720; and Biedermann H., *Handlexikon der Magischen Künste* (Graz: 1973).

of planets relative to one another) of the seven planets in the sky at the moment of the one's birth.

The most important feature of one's horoscope was the Ascendant, the rising zodiacal sign on the East in which the ecliptic intersected the horizon. The Ascendant was always the first of the twelve houses which—in contrast to the zodiacal signs—were not fixed; from this first house the others were counted counter clockwise. Each house was responsible for an important segment in the person's life.<sup>29</sup> When recording the positions of planets in the houses, and the relation of houses to zodiacal signs, the astrologer drew a circular or quadrangular figure (*genitura* or *nativitas*—in English *geniture* or *nativity chart*, referring to the fact that it records the moment of one's birth), putting the time of birth in the middle square. Consequently, the most important piece of information the practitioner had to acquire was the date of birth of the person in question (as exactly as possible). This was most often done with the help of an ephemeris or an almanac, which, even retrospectively, contained a list of the positions of planets at given times of the year (and even the day). These were relatively widespread products of the printing press; however, their quality was often dubious, and not infrequently an astrologer complained that his predictions turned out to be incorrect due to the inexactness of the data provided.

When the *geniture* was cast, the astrologer began to analyse and interpret the results; he had to take into account the aspects of the planets. The most important of the aspects were the conjunction (when two planets enclosed 0 degrees) which intensified their influences, and the opposition (180 degrees), which, on the contrary, meant tension, conflict, and eventually the extinction of one another's power. The square (90 degrees) was also the aspect of obstruction. At the same time, trine (120 degrees) and sextile (60 degrees) were seen as harmonious planetary positions.

The zodiacal sign was not the most important feature of the chart;

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<sup>29</sup> The first house determined the course of life, the second the possession and talent, the third stood for brothers and character traits, the fourth for parents and origin, the fifth was the house of children and vitality, the sixth was the house of health and stamina, the seventh was for marriage and relationships, the eighth stood for death and also for loss and gain, the ninth was that of piety and spirituality, the tenth was for dignity and profession, success, and authority, the eleventh house stood for friends, support, and benefactors, while the twelfth was the house of enemies, hidden things, captivity, and trials.

however, in the case of Martin Luther, for instance, it became a piece of highly relevant information. Many astrologers were trying to understand the role and the final end of Luther from the stars, and some used astrology as religious propaganda against the Protestant leader. Some practitioners pictured him directly as the Antichrist, a prognostication justified by a particularly bad constellation in the year of his birth. Luther got used to being a target of astrologers' attention, and he only laughed<sup>30</sup> when some, usually Catholic, practitioners pointed at his horoscope to demonstrate that he was the archenemy of the Catholic Church. However, all this was mostly done on the basis of an erroneous piece of data. For a long time, Luther himself did not know the exact year of his birth, indicating thus the year 1484, while later from his brother he found out that it was a year earlier. Cardano presumably had his own network of intelligence, and he was informed by a confidential source that the real date was 1483, and when he published his work in 1547, he already built Luther's horoscope around this more exact (or at least more recent) piece of information.<sup>31</sup>

### *The horoscope of Petrarch*

Gerolamo Cardano was the first to offer a collection of horoscopes 'of living and recently deceased celebrities'<sup>32</sup> in a vivid and even gossipy manner, organising his subjects into logical categories. In the largest collection, containing a hundred genitures,<sup>33</sup> the reader finds horoscopes of political figures, emperors, popes and princes (for example, those of the Medici and Farnese families), followed by those of artists (Albert Dürer), literati (George of Trebizond, Francesco Filelfo and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola) and many other well-known personalities of the time preceding or contemporary to his own.

Cardano's horoscope of Francis Petrarch [Fig. 1] appeared in print three times, but the three versions are completely identical.<sup>34</sup> This is

<sup>30</sup> On Luther's arguments against astrology, see Ludolphy I., "Luther und die Astrologie", in Zambelli P. (ed.), *'Astrologi hallucinati'* 101–107.

<sup>31</sup> Cardano, *De exemplis centum geniturarum*, in *Opera omnia* vol. V 465.

<sup>32</sup> Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos* 71.

<sup>33</sup> Cardano, *De exemplis centum geniturarum*, in *Opera omnia* vol. V.

<sup>34</sup> Cardano, *Libelli duo. Unus, de supplemento almanach. Alter, de restitutione temporum et motuum coelestium. Item geniturae LXVII. insignes casibus et fortuna, cum expositione* (Nuremberg:

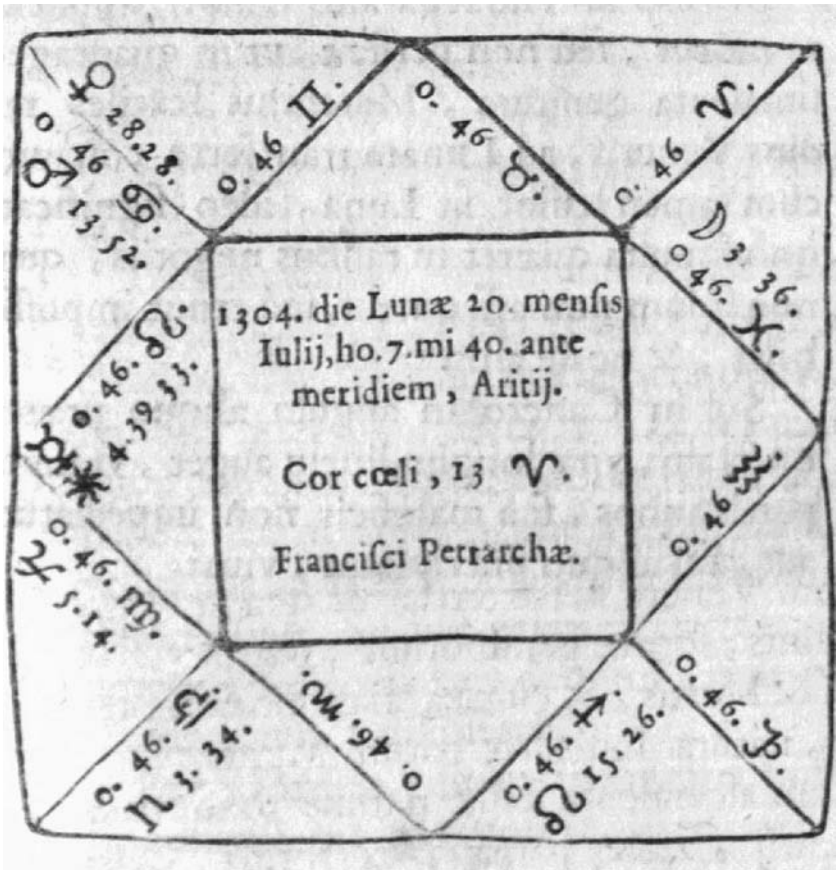


Fig. 1. The horoscope of Francis Petrarch by Gerolamo Cardano in his *Liber de exemplis centum geniturarum, Opera omnia* (Lyons: 1663) V, 458. Courtesy of Somogyi Library, Szeged.

in itself a valuable piece of information, since Cardano was in the habit of constantly revising and rewriting or sometimes even annihilating his own works.<sup>35</sup> The fact that Petrarch's horoscope remained unchanged throughout the decades implies that Cardano was satisfied with this particular chart and its interpretation, and so did not 'rectify' the earlier versions.

After describing the positions of the planets in the chart, Cardano lists the main characteristics that he reads in the geniture, one by one, explaining which planet or constellation was responsible for each one of them. He introduces Petrarch saying that 'there are many distinguishing characteristics in this illustrious person.'<sup>36</sup> The first of his outstanding qualities is the fine charm of his poems, which made Petrarch famous all around the world, and which otherwise is indicated by the presence of the planet Jupiter in the house of Mercury and in square with Venus.<sup>37</sup> Mercury, as is well known, was traditionally associated with a great sense for languages, while Venus was thought to bring sweetness and delicacy to the way of expression. And, Cardano states, this is the constellation that provided such an elegance for Petrarch's high literary expression.<sup>38</sup> In Cardano's reading of the stars, the poet's second main characteristic obvious from his geniture is the combination of the thoroughness of his learning and his immense diligence, features which, due to other planetary influences, are accompanied by a great authority: thus erudition and eloquence are joined by authority as well.<sup>39</sup> The third feature is a permanent

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1543); Id., *Libelli quinque. I. De supplemento almanach, II. De restitutione temporum, III. De iudiciis geniturarum, IV. De revolutionibus, V. De exemplis centum geniturarum* (Nuremberg: 1547) 102–103; and Id., *Liber de exemplis centum geniturarum. Opera omnia* vol. V, 458.

<sup>35</sup> See Maclean I., "Interpreting the *De libris propriis*".

<sup>36</sup> Cardano, *De exemplis centum geniturarum* 465: 'Multa in hoc viro praeclaro egregia fuere'.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.: 'Primum carminum suavitas elegans, qua per universum orbem celebratur. Praestat hoc Iupiter in domo Mercurii, in quadrato Veneris'. ('The first is the fine charm of his poems, which is celebrated all around the world. Planet Jupiter in the house of Mercury and in square with Venus indicates this').

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.: 'Et ideo suaviloquentiam praestat haec constitutio, qua maiorem praestare non potest'. ('And this constellation provided his eloquence, which could not have been any greater').

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.: 'Secundum est, profunditas sensuum cum studio maximo. Praestit hoc Mercurius in ascendenti gradu iuxta Solem, in sextili Saturni, quod in amplissimum auxit coascendens minor canis bebenia, naturae Mercurii. Atque eo modo auctoritatem cum doctrina et eloquentia coniunxit' ('Second is the profoundness of his intelligence and his immense diligence. Mercury causes this, being in ascendant, close to the Sun, and in sextile with Saturn, and this constellation increased largely the influence of the greater star of the Canis Minor, which is of Mercurial nature. Thus erudition and eloquence is joined by authority').

and immutable fame and glory, which is shown by his work's being translated also into Spanish.<sup>40</sup>

The next things important to mention according to the astrologer are the celibacy to which Petrarch gave himself, and the loss of his child. A very intriguing contrast indeed. Cardano explains this odd situation with the stars only partially, for certain angles and barren planetary constellations, so Cardano continues, suggest sterility in Petrarch's life. However, as regards the fact that he had a child, one that Jupiter intended to be misfortunate and short-lived,<sup>41</sup> Cardano does not comment upon it.

Another important characteristic that Cardano notices in Petrarch's horoscope is the meaning of Mercury, which, as mentioned above, gave a knowledge of languages to the poet, who—at least according to the astrologer—spoke Latin and Greek indeed! At the same time, when—as was the case with the poet—Mercury is strong, especially when it is close to the Sun, it gives the knowledge of numerous languages.<sup>42</sup> Finally, the role of the Sun being in the East is equally relevant, since it means a long life, while Jupiter indicates devotion.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.: 'Tertium est, perpetua manens ac indefessa gloria, ut etiam in Hispanicam linguam transierit. Ostendit hoc spica virginis in coeli imo constituta'. ('Third is a permanent and immutable fame, so much so that his work has been translated into Spanish language. It is revealed by the cusp of Venus which is situated in the deepest place of the sky').

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.: 'Quartum est, coelibatus et orbitas: nam decimam Sol aspicit de quadrato, et Mercurius ex angulo, fortis uterque quintam Sol et Mercurius de trino equidem, sed ex sterili signo, Iupiter de quadrato in sterili existens, Saturnus de sextili non in foecundo signo. Habuit igitur filium, quem Iupiter significavit infortunatus, qui brevi supervixit'. ('The fourth is celibacy and the loss of his child: for Sun and Mercury, both strong, observe the tenth house from square; while they both observe the fifth house from trine, thus from a sterile sign, and also Jupiter observes the fifth house from square and from a sterile sign, while Saturn stands in sextile and in a non fertile sign. So he had a child, one that Jupiter intended to be misfortunate, and that lived short').

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.: 'Quintum est, significatio Mercurij linguarum pluralitatem dantis, percalluit enim latinam linguam, ac graecam: semper enim Mercurius fortis pluralitatem dat linguarum, maxime cum Soli propinquus exiterit'. ('The fifth is the meaning of Mercury which gives the knowledge of numerous languages, and he knew Latin and Greek very well. When Mercury is strong it always gives the knowledge of numerous languages, especially when it is close to the Sun').

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.: 'Sol etiam in Oriente, longam vitam decernit. Iupiter autem in secunda, religionem, hoc etiam plerumque facit'. ('Sun being in the East means long life. Jupiter, in the second house, devotion, and this he practiced a lot indeed').



*Interpreting the interpretation: possible sources for  
Cardano's horoscope of Petrarch*

The description that Cardano offers, in my understanding, reveals a lot about Petrarch's reception nearly two hundred years after his death,<sup>44</sup> rather than giving an objective mathematical-astrological account. If Cardano's chart is the reflection of his notions about Petrarch, or perhaps even a conscious shaping of the poet's image, then we have to try and look for his sources of information and the reasons why he would want to manipulate the data.

There is nothing particular in most of his statements: some things were well known already by the contemporaries of the poet; however, one, concerning Petrarch's child, needs to be further investigated. We know that Petrarch had two children,<sup>45</sup> not only one, a boy, Giovanni, but also a girl, Francesca, and he even gave the boy his name and cared for his education, while later it was Francesca and her family who took care of the elderly poet. It seems that Cardano did not have this information at hand when casting the horoscope, or that he did not take the female child into consideration, either because the poet did not legitimise her, or simply because she was a female child.

What written sources were available for Cardano when he erected his chart? In his time, there were various editions of the *Rime*, the *Trionfi*, and also editions of his collected works accessible for biographical research, since they usually contained an introduction.<sup>46</sup> However, none of them corresponds exactly to the combination of data that Cardano offers in his horoscope. Most of the Petrarch biographies that Cardano could have had at hand refer to the girl,<sup>47</sup> if they mention a child at all. Petrarch's daughter is mentioned most often in the context of his testimony, since the poet indicated his

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<sup>44</sup> The horoscope's message was probably positive enough, since the French poet Jacques Peletier accentuates the similarity between his own ascendant and that of Petrarch in his *Commentaire sur la constitution de l'horoscope* (1563). See Balsamo J., "Philippe de Maldeghem ou Pétrarque en Flandre (1600)", in Balsamo J. (ed.), *Les poètes français de la Renaissance et Pétrarque* (Geneva: 2004) 491–505 (esp. 494 n. 11).

<sup>45</sup> See one of the best and most recent syntheses, Dotti U., *Vita di Petrarca* (Bari: 1992) 53 and 111.

<sup>46</sup> Important biographies of Petrarch have been published in Solerti A. (ed.), *Le vite di Dante, Petrarca e Boccaccio scritte fino al secolo decimosesto* (Milan: 1926).

<sup>47</sup> Sicco Polenton, Girolamo Squarciafico, Alessandro Vellutello and Giovan Andrea Gesualdo are all included in Solerti.



son-in-law, Francesca's husband, as his heir. One of his biographers, Vellutello, even declares that 'we know it for sure that he [Petrarch] did not have a male child but a grandson who was born from an illegitimate daughter named Francesca'.<sup>48</sup>

If not from these biographies (some of them popular and reprinted many times in the period in question), Cardano could have gained his notions on Petrarch from other sources. By 1543, the date of his first Petrarch horoscope, various editions of the poet's letters<sup>49</sup> had appeared in print, and these could have provided the astrologer with information concerning his male child. However, this would imply that Cardano went as far in his field research for a single geniture as to read primary sources, and in that case he should also have known about Francesca, whom he does not mention at all. He refers to Petrarch once in his autobiography, saying that he was—together with Luigi Pulci—his favourite Italian poet.<sup>50</sup> Thus, although it does not seem very probable, he could even have read some of the poet's works and yet chosen not to take over everything he found in there.

Only a few biographers speak of Petrarch's efforts to learn Greek,<sup>51</sup> but it was widely known that his attempts had failed utterly. At the same time none of them mentions his work being translated into Spanish; this only appears in Cardano's horoscope. I found a couple of Spanish translations that were published in Cardano's time,<sup>52</sup> and he refers to several Spaniards in his autobiography as friends and patrons, consequently, he may well have become acquainted with the existence of such translations. Although the importance of another possible source of information—the communication network, active via an exchange of letters and manuscripts among scholars—is not

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<sup>48</sup> Vellutello A. (Venice: 1535), also taken up in Solerti, *Le vite di Dante, Petrarca e Boccaccio* 366, states: 'Nondimeno noi abbiamo per cosa certa che non li fu figliuolo, ma nipote, e nato d'una sua non legittima figliuola per nome Francesca [...]'.  
<sup>49</sup> Just to mention a few of them: *Francisci Pet. epistole familiares* (Venice: 1492), the *Opera latina* (Basel: 1496), the *Opera* (Venice: 1501, 1502, etc.), and the *Librorum Francisci Petrarche Impressorum Annotatio. Vita Petrarche edita per Hieronymum Squarzaficum Alexandrinum. Epistole rerum senilium CXXVIII* (Venice: 1503). Petrarch mentioned his son Giovanni in *Familiares* XIII, XVII, XIX, XXII, and *Seniles* I.

<sup>50</sup> Cardano, *De vita propria* 14.

<sup>51</sup> Giannozzo Manetti and G.A. Gesualdo ('egli incominciassse ad imparar lettere greche da Barleamo, un de' Greci da Calabria'), while Fausto da Longiano says that Petrarch excelled in Greek: 'Nei studi greci esercitatissimo'. See Solerti, *Le vite di Dante, Petrarca e Boccaccio*.

<sup>52</sup> See, for instance, *Triumphos de Petrarca. Translacion a los seys triumphos de Fracisco Petrarca de toscano en castellano* (Seville: 1532, and Seville: 1541).

to be neglected,<sup>53</sup> only a small number of letters written by Cardano has survived. Most of them were written after the period in which the horoscopes were cast and, also, the addressees (Carlo Borromeo,<sup>54</sup> Heinrich Petri,<sup>55</sup> Ulisse Aldrovandi,<sup>56</sup> and so on) could not possibly have corresponded with him concerning horoscopes. Therefore, the letters cannot be used as evidence here.

*A horoscope by Gaurico and the rivalry of the two astrologers*

Cardano, however, was not the only one to cast the horoscope of Petrarch. After he published his *Libelli quinque* in 1547, in which he criticised Luca Gaurico,<sup>57</sup> another very well-established astrologer and bishop of Giffoni (in Salerno) for relying too blindly on ancient authorities, his rival came out with his own *Tractatus astrologicus*<sup>58</sup> some years later, in 1552. Gaurico does not miss a single occasion to try and ridicule Cardano. Yet, in his collection of genitures, Gaurico follows Cardano often almost to the letter; he analyses the horoscopes of the same people, in some cases not even taking the trouble to recalculate Cardano's data.

When he talks about Petrarch, he even acknowledges that this geniture was calculated by others.<sup>59</sup> What he says is only a couple of sentences, stating that Petrarch was a very famous poet of Latin and vernacular languages, and that there are obvious signs of his

<sup>53</sup> Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos* 71: [when in his *Libelli duo*] 'Cardano emphasised [...] that he had obtained copies of each royal horoscope 'from a good many places', he indicated that his study formed only one node on an astrological communications network'.

<sup>54</sup> In Dayre J., *Jérôme Cardan (1501–1576), Esquisse Biographique*, Annales de l'Université de Grenoble, Nouvelle Série, Droit et Lettres, IV (Grenoble: 1927) 245–355, and 324–325.

<sup>55</sup> Fierz M., "Drei Briefe von Girolamo Cardano aus Mailand", *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 81 (1981) 179–185.

<sup>56</sup> See Simili A., "Gerolamo Cardano lettore e medico a Bologna", *L'Archiginnasio. Bollettino della Biblioteca comunale di Bologna* 61 (1966) 384–507 (esp. 506–507).

<sup>57</sup> On Gaurico, see Zambelli P., "Da Giulio II a Paolo III: Come l'astrologo provocatore Luca Gaurico divenne vescovo, in Troncarelli F. (ed.), *La città dei segreti. Magia, astrologia e cultura esoterica a Roma (XV–XVIII secolo)* (Milano: 1985) 299–323; McGrath-Quinlan, "The Foundation Horoscope(s)".

<sup>58</sup> Luca Gaurico, *Tractatus astrologicus* (Venice: 1552), in *Opera omnia*, 2 vols (Basel: 1575) II, 1629.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*: 'Istud Schaema coelicum fuit ab aliis supputatum'. ('This geniture was calculated by others').

virtue, worth praising in itself, in his geniture. He was bound to celibacy, although he fathered a child, who died young.<sup>60</sup>

From this chart it becomes clear that Gaurico made a summary of Cardano's statements without bothering to explain where he sees the characteristics that he enlists. He repeats Cardano's mistake of not mentioning the female child, something that—knowing how complicated the way of any other type of information could have been—supports the idea of Gaurico's copying Cardano.

*The geniture cast by Francesco Giuntini*

Francesco Giuntini, the Florentine theologian and mathematician, himself devoted to astrology, as shown by the two folio volumes dedicated to the subject,<sup>61</sup> also cast the horoscope of Petrarch. However, in its final conclusions it does not vary from the other two; in fact, he is very brief and limits himself to the explanation of the planetary constellations<sup>62</sup> without 'writing a biography'.

He is much more interesting to us because—apart from drawing the geniture of the poet—he wrote an entire astrological treatise concerning the exact date of Petrarch's catching sight of and falling in love with Laura. The piece entitled *Discorso sopra il tempo dello innamoramento del Petrarca*<sup>63</sup> examines with philological minutiae whether it was really 'Venerdì Santo' the 6th of April 1327, when the event of such great importance took place. All this is done on the basis of the poet's own sonnets, primarily the 'Già fiammeggiava l'amorosa stella'.

The three horoscopes and this little writing show that there was a general interest on the part of astrologers in Petrarch, who served as an ideal subject for their examinations. He fulfilled the ideal requirements: he was dead for already two hundred years; he was

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.: 'Fuit Poëta clarissimus in lingua Latina, et Vernacula, non indiget bucinatore suarum virtutum, quum per se laudetur, coelibatum servavit, tamen genuit filium, qui cito obiit'. ('He was an illustrious poet of Latin and vernacular, there is no need of advertisement for his virtues, since he is worthy of praise *per se*; he was bound to celibacy, he nevertheless fathered a child who died young').

<sup>61</sup> Giuntini F., *Speculum astrologiae, universam mathematicam scientiam, in certas classes digestam, complectens*, 2 vols (Lyons: 1581).

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., I, 360.

<sup>63</sup> Francesco Giuntini, *Discorso sopra il tempo dello innamoramento del Petrarca. Con la spositione del Sonetto, Già fiammeggiava l'amorosa stella* (Lyons: 1567).

surrounded with stories that, with time, grew to form some sort of patterns easily applicable in horoscopes and biographies. Such a pattern was furnished by his love for Laura, his celibacy, his short-lived son, his eloquence, his knowledge of many languages, and finally his long life.

*The dangers of meddling in politics*

However, it was not always so smooth, easy, and harmless a task to cast the horoscope of a famous personage, especially if the astrologer aimed at the acquisition of a higher position, offering his services to princes or kings, because that necessarily meant playing a very different game.

Meddling in politics was a very dangerous decision, and Cardano also had his share of bitter experiences. When he travelled through England,<sup>64</sup> he was invited to the court of the young King Edward VI and was asked to cast his horoscope. Cardano naturally agreed to do it, and predicted a normally long lifetime and successful career for the weak and indisposed youth.<sup>65</sup> By the time the horoscope was being printed, however, Edward VI had died, leaving Cardano to give embarrassing explanations. He claimed, then, that the error was partially due to the lack of time, which did not allow him to make some final calculations, and also due to the fact that he simply did not dare to tell the truth since he was very afraid of the consequences.<sup>66</sup> And rightly so, since in Ancient Rome, for instance, many astrologers fell victim to their own profession, when predicting something that the emperor did not want to hear. It is not by chance that one of the best-known and most-quoted ancient authorities on astrology, Firmicus Maternus, explicitly claimed that emperors—due to their divine nature—were not subjects to the influence of the

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<sup>64</sup> Cardano was invited to treat the Archbishop of Edinburgh, John Hamilton, and the physician spent most of the year 1552 travelling through northern Europe. See Siraisi, *The Clock and the Mirror* 5, 29, 33, and 207.

<sup>65</sup> Cardano, *Liber xii geniturarum*, and also in *Opera omnia* V, 507.

<sup>66</sup> Cardano, *Liber xii geniturarum*, in *Opera omnia* V, 508, and also quoted in Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos* 123, n. 63, and Shumaker W., "Girolamo Cardano's Horoscope of Christ", in *Renaissance Curiosa* (Binghamton: 1982) 53–90 (esp. 85).

planets. Cardano disapproved of this theory.<sup>67</sup> The incident around Cardano's horoscope for King Edward, despite his efforts at justifying himself, gave grounds for numerous attacks in the years to come.

He was not the only one, certainly, who committed this kind of mistake, but he was unlucky enough to see his work appearing in print and thus becoming widespread among scholars and, even more unluckily, among enemies. His lifelong foe and rival, Luca Gaurico, for instance, was luckier when he cast a horoscope for the Archduke Ferdinand of Habsburg, in which he predicted that the archduke would defeat the Turkish army in a glorious victory and would return to Vienna with the Turkish Sultan in chains.<sup>68</sup> Since his predictions remained in manuscript,<sup>69</sup> others like Cardano could not see and comment on it.

### *Breaking other taboos*

Politics were not the only dangerous ground. Cardano was well known for disregarding widely accepted taboos, and with a daring spirit, he also made a horoscope of Christ.<sup>70</sup> While he really didn't intend to provoke hostile attitude from the Catholic Church against himself, the fact that he dared to treat the Son of God like any other human being, exposed to planetary influences, later landed him in serious trouble. It was omitted, for instance, from the next edition of his commentary on Ptolemy, in 1578, presumably because of the anger that it had provoked.<sup>71</sup>

He defends himself in the following way: 'I do not, however, wish you to understand me to say that either the divinity in Christ, or His miracles, or the sanctity of His life, or His promulgation of the law depends on the stars; but [. . .] the most excellent and glorious God embellished His horoscope with the best and most wonderful disposition of the stars'.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos* 123–124.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* 123.

<sup>69</sup> Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS 7433, 2<sup>v</sup>–3<sup>r</sup>, also mentioned in Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos* 123.

<sup>70</sup> It appeared in print as part of the 12 genitures accompanying Cardano's commentary on Ptolemy. See Shumaker, "Girolamo Cardano's Horoscope of Christ".

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* 69.

<sup>72</sup> Cardano, *Liber xii geniturarum*, quoted in Shumaker, "Girolamo Cardano's Horoscope of Christ" 89.

*Conclusions*

To sum up, I have examined the 'image' that some 16th-century Italian astrologers, and most importantly Gerolamo Cardano, created of the poet Francis Petrarch when casting his horoscope. I was trying to contextualise the genre of horoscope, in order to understand to what degree it could serve as a study of reception, or whether it could stand as a biography, even if an unusual type of it.

I compared and analysed three horoscopes made by three contemporary practitioners of the art, concentrating on the work of the Milanese Gerolamo Cardano, because the others were mostly copying and following him, even if their reasons were very different. Luca Gaurico, a protégé of Pope Paul III, wanted to denigrate Cardano not necessarily by showing professional superiority or giving more exact prognostications but simply by filling his horoscopes with confidential information and gossip about famous people while often using the data that his rival had calculated. Francesco Giuntini was the youngest of the three; he was also devoted to the study of astrology, but his horoscope of the poet does not reveal great ambitions.

At the same time Gerolamo Cardano—although he considered himself primarily as a physician—set a noble task for himself, that of trying to reform the ancient and most noble art of astrology, an art that—according to him—was given to humans by God. Despite his eventual failures and misconceptions in and abuses of this art, he was acknowledged as one of the greatest practitioners of astrology of his age (while the art itself—at least the highly scholarly practice of it—tended to become more and more marginalised after his death).

From his horoscope of Petrarch we can learn many things. First, that a horoscope—with the necessary premises that I indicated earlier—can indeed be considered as a biography or autobiography. Yet, as such, it is still a very neglected source, which would deserve much more attention, since it records and preserves information about the way in which a person was seen by contemporaries or later generations. However, if horoscopes and (auto)biographies are similar genres, they also share the necessary subjectivity of their writers, a filter through which the information passes and which can change the historical facts substantially. While contemporaries, for instance, knew very well that Petrarch—no matter how much he wanted to—did not know Greek, in Cardano's knowledge and interpretation he had become a master of that language. This, as was

indicated earlier, could have been the result of a wrong piece of information as well as a conscious choice.

And we learn also that some basic character traits about Petrarch became well-known patterns in less than two hundred years, serving almost as epic epithets that make the poet recognisable for everyone, not exclusively for those who actually read or studied his works. Consequently, a horoscope, being a popular genre among literate people, could even participate in the process of disseminating an image—true or false—of the person in question.

Thus the Petrarch who came down to us in the horoscopes of Cardano, Gaurico and Giuntini is a man of immense erudition and high intelligence, with a talent for and a knowledge of many languages. One who was bound to celibacy, and who broke his oath only once, to father a child who lived but a short while. And finally, one who—and all his biographers and horoscope-makers agreed on this matter—two hundred years after his death, was seen as an important cornerstone in Italian culture, one of the first who acquired and perpetuated his fame as a poet over the whole world.

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PETRARCH READ AND IMITATED IN  
16TH-CENTURY FRANCE



VISIONS OF RUIN:  
*VANTAS VANITATUM* IN DU BELLAY'S *SONGE* AND  
 PETRARCH'S *CANZONE DELLE VISIONI* (RIME 323)

Reinier Leushuis

One of the most enigmatic of Joachim Du Bellay's poetic works inspired by his only partly successful stay in Rome is no doubt the series of fifteen highly evocative sonnets entitled *Songe, ou Vision* (1558). Published together with his well-known sonnets on Rome's past glory, the *Antiquitez de Rome*, to which it is intended as a hermetic sequel, and in the same year as his equally famous *Regrets*, a sonnet cycle also to a large extent based on Roman experiences, the *Songe* stages a succession of calamities that symbolize the downfall of the ancient city of Rome, observed by the narrator in a dream of haunting dimensions. Yet the poems differ from the *Antiquitez* and the *Regrets* in that Roman antiquity is evoked in universal terms, resulting in an obscure imagery that critics have sought to decipher with varying results. While one critic no doubt exaggerated when calling the *Songe* 'un des textes poétiques les plus obscurs du répertoire français',<sup>1</sup> it is true that rather than an elegiac lamentation over Rome's ruin and a vague hope for its resurrection such as is the *Antiquitez*, the *Songe*'s message seems to lie in its prophetic *vanitas vanitatum* theme, i.e. the ephemeral illusion of earthly glory and beauty.

Among several other mainly Biblical sources, such as *Ecclesiastes* (1: 2) where we find the *vanitas vanitatum* theme, and the Book of Revelation, critics generally agree that an important intertext for the *Songe* was Petrarch's *Canzone delle visioni* (Rime 323 'Standomi un giorno'),<sup>2</sup> which Du Bellay knew most likely through the 1533 French

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<sup>1</sup> Gadoffre G., *Du Bellay et le sacré* (Paris: 1978) 151.

<sup>2</sup> For some of the main critical work on Du Bellay's *Songe*, see: Bondanella J.C., *Petrarch's Visions and their Renaissance Analogues* (Madrid: 1988); Brady Wells M., "Du Bellay's Sonnet Sequence *Songe*", *French Studies* 26 (1972) 1-8; Demerson G., "Le *Songe* de J. Du Bellay et le sens des recueils romains", in Charpentier F. (ed.), *Le Songe à la Renaissance. Colloque international de Cannes 29-31 mai 1987* (Saint Etienne: 1990) 169-78; Gadoffre G., *Du Bellay et le sacré* (note 1) 151-82; Giordano M.J., "Du Bellay's *Songe* and the Ambiguity of Narrative Authority", *Oeuvres et critiques* 11/1

translation by his predecessor Clément Marot.<sup>3</sup> Yet, rather than blindly following Petrarch's six allegorical visions of cataclysm and reversal of fortune symbolizing the death of Laura, of which he reworks only a few directly in his *Songe*, Du Bellay is mostly inspired by the *canzone's* emphasized visual witnessing of ruin by a poet-narrator.

Du Bellay's choice of this particular song from the *Canzoniere* is surprising in the larger context of French Petrarchism: it lacks the typical Petrarchan staging of love's inner conflict, while its visionary nature and its allegorical and emblematic images make it stand apart from many of the sonnets in the *Canzoniere* and recall dream narratives of a rather medieval flavor, such as the *Roman de la rose* and the *Somnium Scipionis*.<sup>4</sup> These aspects are reminiscent of Petrarch's moral works in Latin and we generally do not identify them with the wave of Petrarchism that invaded European poetry and the French Pléiade poets in the Renaissance<sup>5</sup>: this Petrarch seems incompatible with Du Bellay's and Ronsard's legendary praise and imitation of Petrarch the lover-poet, and with their use of conventional Petrarchan imagery in some of their poetry collections.<sup>6</sup>

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«Hermétisme» (1986) 61–77; Hallyn F., “Le *Songe* de Du Bellay: de l'onirique à l'ironique”, in Cesbron G. (ed.), *Du Bellay. Actes du Colloque International d'Angers 26–29 mai 1989* (Angers: 1990) 301–12; Melehy H., “Joachim Du Bellay's Dream Language: The *Songe* as Allegory of Poetic Signification”, *Renaissance and Reformation/ Renaissance et Réforme* 24/2 (2000) 3–21; Poliner S.M., “Du Bellay's *Songe*: Strategies of Deceit, Poetics of Vision”, *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 43/3 (1981) 509–25 and Riffaterre M., *La Production du texte* (Paris: 1979) 113–26.

<sup>3</sup> Marot's popular translation of the *Canzone delle visioni* was first published in his *Suite de l'Adolescence clementine* (1533), reprinted twice (in 1537 and 1538), and included in the first collection of Petrarch's poetry published in France, consisting mainly of Jean Maynier d'Oppède's translation of the *Triumphs* (1538/9, reprinted in 1554). For this issue and for Du Bellay's use of Marot's translation, see among others the articles by Balsamo J., “François I<sup>er</sup>, Clément Marot et les origines du pétrarquisme français (1533–1539)” and Cifarelli P., “Jean Maynier d'Oppède et Pétrarque”, in Balsamo J. (ed.), *Les poètes français de la Renaissance et Pétrarque* (Geneva: 2004) 35–51 and 85–104; as well as Bondanella, *Petrarch's Visions*, and the contribution of Jean Balsamo to the present volume.

<sup>4</sup> Bondanella, *Petrarch's Visions* 8.

<sup>5</sup> See also Bondanella J.C., “Petrarch as Visionary: the Import of Canzone 323”, in Scaglione A. (ed.), *Francis Petrarch, Six Centuries Later. A Symposium* (Chapel Hill-Chicago: 1975) 117–27.

<sup>6</sup> Even a selective overview of the vast bibliography on European and French Petrarchism would fall outside the scope of this article. In this context should be mentioned however Sturm-Maddox S., *Ronsard, Petrarch, and the Amours* (Gainesville: 1999); Kennedy W., *Authorizing Petrarch* (Ithaca: 1994) and the recent collective volumes by Blanc P. (ed.), *Dynamique d'une expansion culturelle. Pétrarque en Europe XIV<sup>e</sup>–XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Actes du XXVI<sup>e</sup> congrès international du CEFI (Turin-Chambéry, 11–15 décembre 1995)*

This study seeks to answer a question which has not received enough critical attention: why did Du Bellay for his oneiric and elegiac contemplations of Rome's ruin seek inspiration in an author who was not particularly imitated by the Pléiade poets for his meditative and philosophical texts, but rather as a popular lover-poet famous for his sonnets exalting the physical beauty of, and expressing his conflictual love for Laura? Through a comparative reading we will argue that Du Bellay's reworking is in fact influenced by the *canzone*'s staging of the lyrical *persona* (i.e. the voice of the narrating 'I', the poetic 'io') in an inner learning process of overcoming visually witnessed earthly vanity. Even though the *Songe* prophesies a universal ethical message of *vanitas vanitatum* that seems distant from the dynamics of an individualized mourning in Petrarch's poem (the poet's allegorical lament over the loss of Laura), Du Bellay's first sonnet programmatically stages the poetic 'I' in a dialogical position that will allow us to read the sequence as a repeated individual process of coming to terms with downfall. We will also claim that in sonnet 13 of the *Songe*, in which Du Bellay most directly borrows imagery from the *canzone*, the imitation of Petrarch's lyrical 'I' leads to a particular *aemulatio* of the mourning poetic *persona*. Finally, we will relate Du Bellay's unusual imitation of Petrarch in the *Songe* to the larger questions regarding the status of the 'philosophical Petrarch' for the Pléiade poets and examine how it questions the generally accepted views on Petrarchism and anti-Petrarchism in the years when Du Bellay published his text.

In the *Canzone delle visioni* six allegorical episodes of downfall appear to the poet at his window: first, a wild animal with a human face is pursued and killed by two greyhounds; second, a beautifully ornamented ship loaded with riches is tossed onto rocks by a sudden tempest; then a description of an idyllic laurel tree suddenly hit by lightning; the fourth episode describes how a softly murmuring fountain with bathing nymphs and muses is swallowed up by the earth. In the fifth stanza, a phoenix beholds the last two scenes in sadness and strikes itself down with its beak without the usual cycle of burning and regeneration; and finally an unsuspecting gracious young woman is

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(Paris: 2001) and Balsamo J. (ed.), *Les poètes français de la Renaissance et Pétrarque*. See for a recent bibliography on French Petrarchism Balsamo J., "«Nous l'avons tous admiré, et imité: non sans cause». Pétrarque en France à la Renaissance: un livre, un modèle, un mythe", in Balsamo, *Les poètes français de la Renaissance et Pétrarque* 13–32.

bitten by a snake and dies. Then follows the conventional *congedo* in which the poet addresses a lament to his own song, expressing his desire to die. Du Bellay bases his *Songe* freely on these scenes: the three direct borrowings are the images of the ship, the tree, and the phoenix, but even these are notably reworked. What firmly links the two poems however is the phantasmagoric effect of calamities repeated in rapid succession, and their strong emphasis on a visionary experience.<sup>7</sup> In Du Bellay's opening sonnet a demon calls up the poet-dreamer to witness the subsequent fourteen scenes of ruin: along with the poet we contemplate the downfall of ancient temples and obelisks by earthquakes and lightning strikes, we see how Rome's Dodonian oak is felled by barbarian troops, how huntsmen chase and kill the Roman she-wolf nourishing her cubs, how a beautiful nymph raises her arms in despair over pillage and civil war by foreign hordes, how a triple flame is extinguished by a golden rain, how a city built on sand is reduced to rubble by a ferocious storm, etc.

The critical studies on Petrarch's *canzone* and Du Bellay's *Songe* do not always give due attention to the role of the narrating lyrical *persona*, emphasizing instead the two poets' use of allegory, visual aspects, and ekphrastic imagery. Starting with the earliest commentaries, critics have read the six calamities of the *canzone* as allegories representing Laura's death.<sup>8</sup> Modern studies have shifted attention to the poem's classical and humanist imagery of a naturalistic and ekphrastic mode and underlined its narrative structure, but have paid little attention

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<sup>7</sup> The long afterlife of both works in poetic and visual culture is proof that they were seen as linked in their powerful visionary aspects. The Dutch Protestant poet Jan van der Noot found in Du Bellay's *Songe* and in an illustrated manuscript of Marot's *Visions* material for an emblem-book denouncing the Catholic church. He also translated into Dutch Petrarch's *canzone* and eleven of the *Songe* sonnets in his *Theater* published in London, a work he later also translated into French and English (1568/9). For the latter translation he received help of Edmund Spenser who then included this translation in his meditations on vanity, the 1591 *Complaints*. See, for instance, Orth M. – Cooper R., "Un manuscrit peint des visions de Pétrarque traduites par Marot", in Balsamo, *Les poètes français de la Renaissance et Pétrarque* 53–71; Malcolm Smith's "Introduction" to Joachim Du Bellay, *Antiquitez de Rome*, translated by Edmund Spenser as *Ruines of Rome* (Binghamton, NY: 1994) 10–14; Ferguson M.W., "«The Afflatus of Ruin»: Meditations on Rome by Du Bellay, Spenser, and Stevens", in Patterson A. (ed.), *Roman Images* (Baltimore: 1984) 23–50; and the contribution of Paul Smith to the present volume.

<sup>8</sup> For bibliography on earlier commentators, see Mussio T.E., "The Phoenix Narrative in Canzone 323", *Rivista di studi italiani* 18/2 (2000) 14–31 and Bondanella, *Petrarch's Visions*.

to the effect of visual perception on the poet-narrator.<sup>9</sup> A similar tendency towards allegorical interpretation has dominated the critical studies of Du Bellay's *Songe*. Some interpret the message of the sonnet sequence as a political allegory of *translatio imperii*,<sup>10</sup> while others call the *Songe* a 'pamphlet gallican' lamenting the decadence of Papal Rome soon to be destroyed by the Protestant Reformers.<sup>11</sup> Yet few studies focus on the role of the lyrical narrator,<sup>12</sup> which should now be elucidated through Petrarch's intertext.

In Petrarch's *canzone*, the poet-narrator, although recalling a past experience, is not narrating a dream, but a vision that potentially occurred in real life, namely one day when he was looking out the window: 'Standomi un giorno solo a la fenestra' (v. 1).<sup>13</sup> The 'fenestra' can be read, more than just a symbol of the soul, as a mediating visual interface between the observing 'io' in his initially detached individual space ('la fenestra/onde [. . .] vedea' [vv. 1–2]), who is moreover emphatically alone ('solo' [v. 1]), and the outside reality of ruin and calamity that makes its traumatizing mark on the narrator ('cose [. . .] tante e sì nuove' [v. 2]). This initial diegetic situation stages the 'io poetico' in a crucial narrative role which stresses the individual mourning over real outside calamities (whereby 'real' is in opposition to the entirely oneiric and therefore purely prophetic calamities of Du Bellay's poem).

The lyrical *persona's* mourning is rhythmically sustained throughout the *canzone*, almost in the manner of a litany whereby each vision calls forth a concluding expression of bereavement which inscribes

<sup>9</sup> See Maggini F., "La canzone delle visioni", *Studi petrarcheschi* 1 (1948) 37–50 and Chiappelli F., *Studi sul linguaggio del Petrarca: la canzone delle visioni* (Florence: 1971). See for some discussion of the general visionary aspects Bondanella, "Petrarch as Visionary" and of the relationship between "io poetico" and the figure of Laura in the poem Frare P., "Dalla contrapposizione alla identificazione: l'io e Laura nella canzone delle visioni", *Strumenti critici* 15/3 (1991) 387–403.

<sup>10</sup> Demerson, "Le Songe de J. Du Bellay", 173: 'Ce que le Songe attaque, c'est la *translatio*, le passage de l'Empire de Rome au Saint Empire Romain Germanique'. See also Hallyn F., "Le Songe de Du Bellay".

<sup>11</sup> Gadoffre, *Du Bellay et le sacré* 181. See for an alternative interpretation Skenazi C., "Le poète et le roi dans les *Antiquitez* et le *Songe* de Du Bellay", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 60 (1998) 41–55.

<sup>12</sup> See the studies by Giordano, "Du Bellay's *Songe*" and Melehy, "Joachim Du Bellay's Dream Language".

<sup>13</sup> Francesco Petrarch, *Petrarch's Lyric Poems. The Rime sparse and Other Lyrics*, ed. R.M. Durling (Cambridge, MA: 1976) 502–505. All further quotations will be from this edition and will be indicated with verse numbers between brackets. Emphasis added.



the more universal *vanitas vanitatum* theme at a deeper, inner level. In the first three stanzas this individualized grief is rendered through short, exclamatory phrases. The first episode leads the poet to 'sospirar sua dura sorte' (v. 12), the second vision leads to the exclamation: 'O che grave cordoglio!' (v. 21); and the laurel tree being struck by lightning, in spite of a more universal biblical and prelapsarian tone ('ch'un delli arbor pareva di paradiso' [v. 27]), calls forth an utterly personal lament upon the sadness of poet's life in its postlapsarian reality ('onde mia vita è trista,/ che simile ombra mai non si racquista' [vv. 35–36]).

Individualized grief is gradually intensified in the second half of the *canzone*: the *locus amoenus* of the fountain being swallowed up by the earth in the fourth stanza is carried over from the past to evoke an experience of pain in a present shared by the reader: 'ond'anchor doglia sento/ et sol de la memoria mi sgomento' (vv. 47–48). Moreover, a significant change in perspective occurs in this stanza, since the poet-narrator has now entered the reality of his own vision ('Ivi m'assisi' [v. 43]). This blurring of the outside reality of calamities and the inner world of the poet-narrator's perception intensifies the latter's experience of downfall: rather than merely observing ruin, he is now 'living' it. A similar interweaving of the poet's perception and the world of the vision itself occurs in the fifth stanza where the phoenix strikes itself with its beak. In this image, the phoenix is now put in the position of the observer ('mirando le frondi a terra sparse' [v. 56]), while the poet's experience of burning pity and love ('onde 'l cor di pietate et d'amor m'arse' [v. 60], with the word 'burning' carrying emphasis in the final position of the verse) recalls the self-combustion, absent in Petrarch, that usually befalls the phoenix. Moreover, the bird's turning its beak against itself ('volsse in se stessa il becco,/ quasi sdegnando' [vv. 58–59]) foreshadows and metaphorically reinforces the inward turn that the poet-narrator has to make in his learning process: visually witnessed ruin triggers a liberation from earthly vanity at an inner ethical level. Finally, the lady being mortally wounded by the snake leads to the exclamation 'Ahi, nulla, altro che *pianto*, al mondo dura!' (v. 72). In spite of a seemingly more universal tone, the crying ('pianto') should in fact be understood on the most individual level of Petrarch's tears, the only thing left to the poet-narrator in his earthly life ('mondo').

The poem's *congedo* merits a close analysis as it epitomizes the poet's inner journey: 'Canzon, tu puoi ben dire:/ «Queste sei visioni

al signor mio / àn fatto un dolce di morir desio» (vv. 73–75). The final personification of the poet's own song into a speaking interlocutor ('tu puoi ben dire') whom he addresses is a feature not uncommon in other *canzoni*.<sup>14</sup> However, in this case the dialogical setting could be called an inner dialogue to the extent that it stages the poet's voice and the poem itself as a product of the poet's mind. This final dialogical setting thus reformulates the entire *canzone* as an interior learning process of prevailing over the ruin of all worldly things under the guidance of the poetic fiction itself, functioning as the dialogical other voice in the poet's mind. These dialogical dynamics call to mind those of the *Secretum*, which also stages an ongoing meditation on mortality through an inner dialogue, in this case between the poet and the spirit of saint Augustine conjured up by the poet's fiction. Similarly to the Augustinian meditation on death and mortality in the *Secretum*, namely one that ultimately frees the soul from sin and earthly pleasures, the *canzone*'s inner learning process leads to what is to be expected from a well carried out *meditatio mortis*: the desire to die has now become 'dolce' (v. 75) because the effect of mourning over downfall has led Petrarch's individual lyrical *persona*, guided by his own poetic fiction, to overcome and free himself from earthly glory and beauty.

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At first reading, Du Bellay's *Songe* replaces the individual mourning of Petrarch's lost love for Laura by a universal ethical message of *vanitas vanitatum* whereby the poet-narrator plays a more passive role in the observation of monuments and their downfall (witnessed with a simple 'je vis'),<sup>15</sup> and the contrast between earthly splendor and terrible devastation has a more prophetic tone than in Petrarch. Clearly, Du Bellay had in mind the origin of the word 'monument', namely the Latin verb *moneo-monere* which, as Eric MacPhail reminds us, has the double meaning of recalling and warning, i.e. to recall the past glory and subsequent downfall in order to profess a future warning

<sup>14</sup> See for instance *Rime* 53, 71, 119, 128, 135 and 331.

<sup>15</sup> See for instance Sonnet II, v. 1. Cf. Joachim Du Bellay, *Les Regrets et autres oeuvres poétiques, suivies des Antiquitez de Rome—Plus un Songe, ou Vision sur le mesme subject*, ed. M.A. Screech (Geneva: 1974). All further quotations from the *Songe* and the *Antiquitez* will be from this edition and will be indicated with verse numbers between brackets. Emphasis added.

of an ethical character.<sup>16</sup> The dream-setting renders this vision more universal: even if the dream occurred to only one individual, its message seems to be directed towards mankind.<sup>17</sup>

Yet readings of the *Songe* as a universal message based on a humanist, political, or national agenda tend to overlook the role of the lyrical 'I' translating his visions to the reader. In order to reinterpret the role of the poet-narrator, the first of the sequence's fifteen sonnets should be the focus of our attention since it stages in a programmatic manner the dynamics of downfall, witnessing, and effect on the inner poet:

C'estoit alors que le present des Dieux,  
Plus doucement s'écoule aux yeux de l'homme,  
Faisant noyer dedans l'oubly du somme  
Tout le soucy du jour laborieux  
Quand un Demon apparut à mes yeux,  
Dessus le bord du grand fleuve de Rome  
Qui m'appellant du nom dont je me nomme,  
Me commanda regarder vers les cieux.  
Puis m'escria, Voy (dit-il) & contemple  
Tout ce qui est compris sous ce grand temple  
Voy comme tout n'est rien que vanité.  
Lors cognoissant la mondaine inconstance,  
Puis que Dieu seul au temps fait resistance,  
N'espere rien qu'en la divinité.

The demon figure, as Michael Giordano reminds us, has a long tradition in a variety of roles as guide or mediator, such as between the gods and men (Plato), or between man and his moral conscience (Socrates).<sup>18</sup> Indeed, in the case of the *Songe*, the demon acts as the intermediary between the world of the vision and the witnessing poet. Yet in our view one cannot claim, as does Giordano, that the demon reduces the role of the poet-narrator to that of a mere witness, nor

<sup>16</sup> MacPhail E., "Prophecy and Memory in the Renaissance Dream Vision", in *The Force of Vision. Proceedings of the XIIIth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association* (Tokyo: 1995) 194.

<sup>17</sup> As Diane Desrosiers-Bonin points out, Du Bellay was most likely inspired by that other famous dream of universal ethical dimensions, the *Somnium Scipionis*, notably in his staging of the demon that guides Du Bellay's vision. See Desrosiers-Bonin D., "Le *Songe de Scipion* et le commentaire de Macrobie à la Renaissance", in *Le Songe à la Renaissance* 71–81. Also, the very first quatrain ('C'estoit alors que [...] le soucy du jour laborieux' [vv. 1–4]) calls to mind Aeneas' dream in Virgil in which the founding of Rome by his descendants is revealed to him.

<sup>18</sup> Giordano, "Du Bellay's *Songe*" 63. See also Poliner, "Du Bellay's *Songe*".

does its presence cause a 'depersonalization' of the lyrical *persona* into merely a 'reflexive eye that mirrors the apocalyptic consequences of hubris'.<sup>19</sup> In fact, the poet-narrator's role in the observation of ruin imitates Petrarch's staging of the poetic 'I' and features a similar process of coming to terms with the effect of ruin at the inner level.

In this respect, we should first turn our attention to the interesting poetics revealed in the assonate and alliterative qualities of the second quatrain of the first sonnet. Without Du Bellay mentioning his own name, he says that the demon 'called him by the name by which he is usually called' ('m'appellant du nom dont je me nomme' [v. 7]). Rather than a form of depersonalization,—for which the argument would go: he does not call himself Du Bellay, therefore the author figure has eliminated himself—, the poet-narrator, on the contrary, operates a poetic signature of a most individual nature. The assonance of the sometimes nasal 'o' sound ([ɔ] or [ɔ̃]) and the alliteration of the consonants [n] and [m], in particular in combination with each other, phonetically link the name and identity of the poet-narrator ('me', 'nom', 'nomme') to that of the eternal city ('Rome'). Moreover, these phonetic effects also refer the reader back to one of the most hallmark sonnets of the *Antiquitez* (it should be remembered that the *Songe* was published in the same volume as the *Antiquitez*, to which it forms a sequel) and to Du Bellay's famous word-play on the name of Rome in it: 'Nouveau venu, qui cherches Rome en Rome,/ Et rien de Rome en Rome n'apperçois,/ Ces vieux palais, ces vieux arcz que tu vois,/ Et ces vieux murs, c'est ce que Rome on nomme' (sonnet 3, vv. 1–4). Not only is it thus clear to the attentive reader that it is Joachim Du Bellay, author of the famous *Antiquitez*, the sonnets on the past glory of Rome, who presents his own individual vision of ruin, but the *Songe* also continues from the *Antiquitez* the inextricable link between poet-narrator-observer and the city of Rome. In other words, it is programmatically established that the downfall of Rome throughout the *Songe* is mirrored in the poet's inner world.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Giordano, "Du Bellay's *Songe*" 72.

<sup>20</sup> The assonate and alliterative links between the name of Rome and the name of the poet also point to the poet's need to immortalize his name through the rebirth of Rome in his poetry, an aspect highly emphasized in the *Antiquitez* and to some extent also in the *Songe*. This aspect, amply commented upon in critical studies, will be taken into account further below.

Furthermore, the effects of assonance and alliteration on the various combinations of 'o' and 'm' sounds return in the first and last lines of the second quatrain. In this instance, the phonetic signature of Du Bellay's lyrical *persona* singing of Rome applies to the demon-figure ('Demon'),—phonetically emphasized as the *genus loci* of Rome in 'dessus le bord du grand fleuve de Rome'—, and his exhortation ('me commanda'), and establishes both as the poetic invention of the poet-narrator. This phonetic landscape (nomme—(Rome)—Demon) thus stages the lyrical *persona* in interaction with the demon as another voice of himself, establishing both voices as inherently linked to the city of Rome. The dialogicity of the other voice is moreover picked up in the 'dit-il' of the first line of the first tercet, establishing it for the rest of the demon's exhortation until the end of the sonnet. Thus in spite of the seemingly universalized and depersonalized dream message that the *Songe* appears to convey to the reader, the very first and most programmatic sonnet of the sequence in fact stages the lyrical 'je' as dialogical interlocutor, a position that makes us reconsider his role in the rest of the visions.<sup>21</sup>

The poetic-dialogical interaction between the lyrical *persona* and the demon is reinforced in the most significant line of the first sonnet, 'Voy comme tout n'est rien que vanité' (v. 11). The demon's imperative command 'voy' triggers a repeated reply by the poet-narrator, who in the rest of the sequence over and over reiterates his 'je vis' in response to the demon's initial exhortation. It should be stressed that this litany serves the purpose of sustaining the dialogical setting of the programmatic first sonnet between poet-narrator and demon throughout the entire sequence. Second, in this verse so blatantly stating the central *vanitas vanitatum* theme, the adverb 'comme' continues the assonate and alliterative effects of Du Bellay's poetic signature, thus highlighting the dialogical significance of that signature as a pivotal point between the demon's exhortation and the poet-narrator's inner reaction: the address '*see how* all is but vanity' is answered by

<sup>21</sup> The presence of the demon as the 'other' voice of the lyrical *persona* is manifest in the recalling of the *vanitas vanitatum* theme in the first three sonnets. The vocabulary of the demon's moral message in the tercets of the first sonnet is repeated in two occurrences of the theme in sonnet 2 and 3, but in an intentional blurring of the voices of demon and poet. It is not clear whether it is the poet-narrator proclaiming or the demon reiterating the moral message in 'O vanité du monde!' in sonnet 2 (v. 12) and 'Las rien ne dure au monde que torment!' in sonnet 3 (v. 12).

a repeated 'I *saw how* all is but vanity', as worked out in the various images of the *Songe*.

Underneath Du Bellay's prophesizing of a universal ethical message the lyrical *persona* is staged in a role reminiscent of the poetic 'I' in Petrarch, namely one of an interlocutor in a dialogical setting with the poetic fiction itself. Both Petrarch's *canzone*, personified as a speaking interlocutor in the *congedo*, and Du Bellay's phonetic landscape staging the poet and the demon in their connection to Rome, create an 'other voice' which fulfills the role of guide for the poet's liberation from earthly vanity. To be sure, Du Bellay programmatically establishes this learning process in the very first sonnet while in Petrarch it is the very end of the cycle that retrospectively creates a poetic-dialogical set-up, but that does not detract from the larger dynamics of the learning process. And apart from the opening sonnet, other examples in the *Songe*'s sequence underline the poet-narrator's attraction to earthly glory before he witnesses the moment of ruin, thus implying that every vision of the sequence is a lesson. In sonnet 5 the poet admits to be 'ravished' by the beauty of the Dodonian tree ('J'estois ravy de voir' [v. 9]) and equally in sonnets 8 and 14 he admits to be strongly impressed by the beauty and glory of the objects he sees before they are victims of ruin ('J'estois *esmerveillé* de voir' [v. 9 in both sonnets]). As for Petrarch's poet-narrator, so for the *Songe*'s protagonist, each cataclysm functions as a repeated miniature learning process of the witnessing poet-narrator overcoming the vanity of earthly glory. The role of the poet-narrator in Du Bellay's first sonnet does therefore not undermine the universal nature of the *Songe*, but rather serves to reinforce its ethical message of *vanitas vanitatum* at an individual level. It deepens the *Songe*'s moral inquiry by adding to it the element of individual poetic meditation on ruin. Played out in front of the reader's eyes is an ethical meditation on downfall and mortality mediated through a dialogical exchange between the lyrical *persona* and a spirit from the afterlife. Since both are products of the poet's mind we can speak of an inner *meditatio mortis* which again recalls Petrarch's model of the *Secretum*.

Our understanding of the role of the *Songe*'s lyrical narrator as imitated from Petrarch will further benefit from an analysis of sonnet thirteen,—the one vision of the *Songe* that borrows its material most directly from Petrarch's *canzone*—, in which the shipwrecked 'Naselle' emerges from the waves after having lost its rich cargo ('Puis vy la Nef se ressourdre sur l'onde' [v. 14]). What should be noted

first is that the resurfacing of the ship in this sonnet forms an exception to the *Songe*'s rule of ultimate ruin without hope for regeneration, a phenomenon that we see as well in some form in two other images of a clearly Petrarchan influence.<sup>22</sup> Second, in reading the sonnet, we are struck by a general tendency to surpass Petrarch's vision:

Plus riche assez que ne se monstroît celle  
 Qui apparut au triste Florentin,  
 Jettant ma veüe au rivage Latin  
 Je vy de loing surgir une Nasselle:  
 Mais tout soudain la tempeste cruelle,  
 Portant envie à si riche butin,  
 Vint assaillir d'un Aquilon mutin  
 La belle Nef des autres la plus belle.  
 Finablement l'orage impetueux  
 Fit abysmer d'un gouphre tortueux  
 La grand' richesse à nulle autre seconde.  
 Je vy sous l'eau perdre le beau thresor,  
 La belle Nef, & les Nochers encor,  
 Puis vy la Nef se ressourdre sur l'onde.

Most noticeable is Du Bellay's need to outshine Petrarch's already sublime evocation of a ship of perfect beauty ('le sarte di seta, et d'or la vela,/ tutta d'avorio e d'ebeno contesta' [vv. 14–15]) in superlative constructions: '*Plus riche assez que ne se monstroît celle/ Qui apparut au triste Florentin*' (v. 1) and '*La belle Nef des autres la plus belle*' (v. 8). Moreover, the one verse that Du Bellay borrows word for word from Petrarch, '*La grand' richesse à nulle autre seconde*' (v. 11), which in the *canzone* ('l'altre ricchezze a null'altre seconde!' [v. 24]) is the last verse of the stanza and leaves no space for renewal, is followed in the *Songe* by the strophe in which the ship reappears: '*Puis vy la Nef se ressourdre sur l'onde*' (v. 14), a resurfacing that acquires even more contrast since it follows the only superlative construction already used by Petrarch.

An interpretation of these images of surpassing and renewal in light of the Reformational context is certainly plausible, and critics have recognized in the ship that of the papacy cleansed of its decadent

<sup>22</sup> In sonnet 5 we recognize the image of Petrarch's laurel tree struck by lightning in the Roman oak destroyed by barbarian troops, yet here it springs up again as two small trees; in sonnet 7, Petrarch's phoenix unable to regenerate is reworked into an eagle crashing down in flames. But Du Bellay uses the phoenix imagery of ashes to represent the bird's rebirth as a night-owl.

riches by the Reformation.<sup>23</sup> Yet Du Bellay's renewal could also be considered one of a particular poetic type, giving expression to a desire for *aemulatio* of Petrarch and therefore individual poetic glory.<sup>24</sup> Such a reading seems in line with the general tendency in Du Bellay's Roman cycles to immortalize his poetry through the rebirth of Rome's monuments in the *exegi monumentum* of his sonnets, a phenomenon well-commented in critical studies.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, in view of the ethical message of *vanitas vanitatum* in both *canzone* and *Songe*, poetic glory is a problematic notion since, at least for Petrarch, it would belong in the category of ephemeral worldly glory that is subject to definitive ruin. Moreover, unlike the *Antiquitez*, the issue in the *Songe* is not the rebirth of Rome, but a mourning over its definitive downfall. Within this latter perspective, one could argue for an interpretation focusing on Du Bellay's emulation of the role of the lyrical narrator in the poetic mourning process, and it is in particular his evocation of the 'triste Florentin' (v. 2) that should retain our attention. Petrarch as the perceiving lyrical narrator in the *canzone* is with this appellation well-defined as a mourning subject trying to come to terms with ruin. As the sad Florentine occupies a central position in the superlative construction that so powerfully opens the sonnet ('*Plus riche assez que ne se monstroît celle/ Qui apparut au triste Florentin*'), his figure makes this sonnet one about emulating the poet-narrator's mourning in the contemplation of ruin and downfall. Since Du Bellay insists on ruin being even more calamitous than in Petrarch, its initial earthly beauty being even greater, the poet-narrator thus surpasses the sad Florentine in mourning and in his efforts to overcome downfall and ruin. In this interpretation, the re-emerging ship stands for nothing but the soul of Du Bellay's lyrical *persona* who, after a more painful learning process of visual witnessing of ruin and downfall, is now completely cleansed and liberated from its sinful temptation by earthly beauty and glory.

<sup>23</sup> Gadoffre, *Du Bellay et le sacré* 174–75.

<sup>24</sup> We can also think of poetic *aemulatio* in sonnet 5 where the image of the Roman oak springing up in two smaller trees lends itself to both a political-religious interpretation (the ancient Roman empire is reborn in the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy), and a poetic one: Du Bellay applies an image of revival to the ultimate destruction of Petrarch's laurel tree, the very symbol of poetic glory.

<sup>25</sup> See for instance Greene T., *The Light in Troy. Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: 1982), chapter 11 ('Du Bellay and the Disinterment of Rome') 220–41.



\* \* \*

To conclude, we should reconsider the results of our comparative analysis of the role of the lyrical *persona* in Petrarch and Du Bellay in light of the larger question of imitation of Petrarch by the Pléiade poets, in particular with respect to their alternating waves of Petrarchism and anti-Petrarchism. Rather than reworking a usual Laura sonnet, Du Bellay chose to adapt the least typical example of Petrarchan love poetry and purposefully omitted love psychology from the poem (i.e. the allegorical representation of Petrarch's lost love for Laura, that had still survived in Clément Marot's translation). Both Du Bellay's emphasis on the Petrarchan processes of witnessing ruin, poetic mourning, and liberation from earthly glory, and his poetic *aemulatio* of the sad Florentine's dynamics of *meditatio mortis* in the poet-narrator's inner experience, shift the focus of attention away from the typical imitation of Petrarch the 'lover-poet', and pose the question how the Pléiade poets read and were influenced by the inner ethical conflicts typical of the 'philosophical' Petrarch.

Two brief observations are proposed here to shed light on these issues. First, it is important to underline that the publication of the *Songe* immediately follows the anti-Petrarchan wave experienced by the Pléiade poets in the years 1553–1558. These years not only coincide with Du Bellay's stay in Rome, but are also marked by the publication of two different versions of the poet's notorious attack against the stifling, artificial, and insincere *topoi* typical of blind imitation of conventional Petrarchan love poetry, first in 'A une dame' in his *Recueil de poésie* (1553), then in 'Contre les pétrarquistes' in *Divers jeux rustiques* (1558).<sup>26</sup> The crisis of what Ronsard, as early as in 1550, called 'le petit sonnet pétrarquisé'<sup>27</sup> later led this Pléiade colleague of Du Bellay to exchange in the 1555 *Continuation des Amours* his beloved Cassandre reminiscent of Laura, and the accompanying complexities of the Petrarchan style, for a very French Marie praised in a more down-to-earth 'style bas'. A somewhat similar move is made by Du Bellay in the 1553 *Recueil de poésie* where, according to V.L. Saulnier, the poet abandons Petrarchan influences to adopt 'une

<sup>26</sup> See Weinberg B., "Du Bellay's *Contre les Pétrarquistes*", *L'Esprit créateur* 12/3 (1972) 159–77.

<sup>27</sup> Pierre de Ronsard, "Preface to his *Odes*" in *Critical Prefaces of the French Renaissance*, ed. B. Weinberg (New York: 1970) 147.

idée de l'amour très humaine.<sup>28</sup> It should be stressed that this reaction against the stifling conventions of an overly Petrarchan love poetry did not lead Du Bellay to recoil altogether from Petrarch, but rather we suggest that his tendency towards larger moral questions that coincides with his anti-Petrarchan period, his stay in Rome, and the subsequent publication of the Roman sonnet cycles, impelled him to turn toward the 'other' Petrarch, the moral Christian philosopher. After all, as early as 1552, in *La lyre chrestienne*, Du Bellay had expressed his desire to be a poet-philosopher rather than a lover-poet, as manifest for instance in his disdain for the 'Muse charnelle' and in the praise for the poet holding earthly glory in contempt.<sup>29</sup>

This brings us to our second and final observation. Du Bellay's reworking of the *Canzone delle visioni* nuances the generally accepted notion of two realms of imitation of Petrarch in the French Renaissance, existing side by side but involving two distinct audiences, namely on the one hand imitation of his vernacular love poetry, in particular the *Canzoniere*, by the poetic tradition, and on the other hand imitation by the humanists of his Latin works of moral philosophy, such as *De remediis utriusque fortune*.<sup>30</sup> The *Songe*'s emphasis on a lyrical narrator experiencing ruin at an inner ethical level and undergoing a learning process reminiscent of Petrarchan and Augustinian *meditatio mortis* points to a blurring of poetic and philosophical imitation. Besides the atmosphere evoking Petrarch's *Secretum*, the poem's litany of calamities calls to mind the general idea of reversal of fortune

<sup>28</sup> Saulnier V.L., *Du Bellay. L'Homme et l'oeuvre* (Paris: 1951) 67.

<sup>29</sup> Joachim Du Bellay, "Inventions de l'auteur", in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. H. Chamard, vol. 4: *Recueils lyriques* (Paris: 1934) 137–144: 'Bien heureux donques est celui/ Qui a fondé son assurance/ Aux choses dont le ferme appuy/ Ne dement point son esperance/ [...] Celuy encor' ne cherche pas/ La gloire, que le temps consomme:/ Sachant que rien n'est icy bas/ Immortel, que l'esprit de l'homme'.

<sup>30</sup> The presence of the 'philosophical Petrarch' in 16th-century France has been amply attested by earlier scholarship. See for example Simone F., *Il Rinascimento francese. Studi e ricerche* (Turin: 1961) chapter V ('La fortuna del Petrarca in Francia nella prima metà del Cinquecento') 141–222; Mann N., "La fortune de Pétrarque en France: Recherches sur le «De Remediis»", *Studi Francesi* 37 (1969) 1–15; Françon M., "Sur l'Influence de Pétrarque en France aux XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> Siècles" in Keller L. (ed.), *Übersetzung und Nachahmung im europäischen Petrarkismus. Studien und Texte* (Stuttgart: 1974) 12–18; and Balsamo J., "Quelques remarques sur les collections d'éditions anciennes de Pétrarque conservées en France et les conditions éditoriales du Pétrarquisme", in Blanc P. (ed.), *Dynamique d'une expansion culturelle* 87–97. For a listing of manuscripts of Petrarch's works in French libraries of the 15th and 16th centuries, see Pellegrin E., *Manuscrits de Pétrarque dans les bibliothèques de France* (Padova: 1966).

that could be inspired by *De remediis utriusque fortunae*. After all, is not the *ubi sunt*-motive of the past glory of Roman monuments powerfully elaborated in the 118th dialogue of book I ‘Ex aedificiis gloriam spero’, moreover a dialogical setting of two voices, Reason and Hope, recalling the pattern of the inner dialogical learning process?<sup>31</sup> Or could we not make a fruitful comparison to Petrarch’s *Trionfi*, that other example of a poetic form mediating between evocations of Laura and philosophical meditations on mortality?<sup>32</sup> (Marot’s version of the *canzone* was included in the first French translation of the *Triumphes* (1538/9) by Jean Maynier d’Oppède, who called Petrarch the ‘moral poète Florentin’ and knew his *De Remediis*).<sup>33</sup> Attempting to provide even the most preliminary answers to these questions, in particular to the issue of whether the Pléiade poets actually knew and read texts like the *Secretum* and *De Remediis*, would exceed the scope of this essay.<sup>34</sup> But what needs to be stressed is that a text like the *Songe* helps to nuance our idea of imitation of Petrarch in the French Renaissance. Within the seemingly unproblematic coexistence of the moral and Latin Petrarch on the one hand, and Petrarch the vernacular poet on the other hand,<sup>35</sup> the *Songe* exemplifies a middle ground of poetic philosophy, or philosophical poetry, that forces critics dealing with either Petrarch to look at the ‘other’ Petrarch.

<sup>31</sup> *Petrarch’s Remedies for Fortune Fair and Foul*, ed. C.H. Rawski (Bloomington, IN: 1991) I, 314–19.

<sup>32</sup> For the widespread success of the *Trionfi* in Renaissance France, see among others Simone F., *Il Rinascimento francese* 177–222.

<sup>33</sup> See Balsamo, “François I<sup>er</sup>, Clément Marot” 44–45; and Cifarelli, “Jean Maynier d’Oppède et Pétrarque”.

<sup>34</sup> For an exploration of the influence of Petrarch’s *Secretum* on the early poetry of Marguerite de Navarre, see my “Dialogue, Self, and Free Will: Marguerite de Navarre’s *Dialogue en forme de vision nocturne* and Petrarch’s *Secretum*”, *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance* 66 (2004) 63–83.

<sup>35</sup> Balsamo J., “«Nous l’avons tous admiré, et imité: non sans cause»” 17: ‘Le Pétrarque «Latin» des traités moraux et le Pétrarque «vulgaire» ont ainsi coexisté durant tout le siècle, ont continué à être réunis, touchant des lecteurs nombreux et divers’.

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TRUTH IS JUST AN OPTION: DU BELLAY'S  
PHILOSOPHICAL CRITIQUE OF IMITATION IN  
*CONTRE LES PÉTRARQUISTES*

Dina De Rentiis

Among the 'friends and foes of the poet laureate' whom we encounter in the early modern ages, Joachim Du Bellay is one of the best known and most important.<sup>1</sup> As a lyrical author, Du Bellay was one of the prominent imitators of the *Canzoniere* who promoted and established Petrarchism in his country. In his *Deffence et illustration de la langue françoise*, the key poetical manifesto of Renaissance French literature, he contributed to establish Petrarch as a literary model comparable to Horace, Ovid, Tibullus and the other exemplary ancient authors.

In his love lyrics, Du Bellay appears as a very typical representative of French petrarchist *aemulatio*. For example, in the introductory sonnet of his collection *L'Olive*, he proudly announces that he does not wish to become a *poeta laureatus*:

Je ne quiers pas la fameuse couronne,  
Saint ornement du Dieu au chef doré,  
Ou que du Dieu aux Indes adoré  
Le gay chapeau la teste m'environne.  
Encores moins veulx-je que l'on me donne  
Le mol rameau en Cypre décoré:  
Celuy qui est d'Athenes honoré,  
Seul je le veulx, et le Ciel me l'ordonne.  
O tige heureux, que la sage Déesse  
En sa tutelle, et garde a voulu prendre,  
Pour faire honneur à son sacré autel!  
Orne mon chef, donne moy hardiesse  
De te chanter, qui espere te rendre  
Egal un jour au laurier immortel.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On the reception of Petrarch in Renaissance France see the excellent volume Balsamo J. (ed.), *Les poètes français de la Renaissance et Pétrarque* (Genève: 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Du Bellay Joachim, *Oeuvres poétiques. Premiers recueils, 1549–1553* (Paris: 1993), URL (April 2005): <http://gallica.bnf.fr>.

The metaphorical game is quite transparent: By emulating the classical models, synecdotically represented by their crowning branches (e. g. laurel, vine leaf), Du Bellay declares to strive at creating a new literature which is meant to surpass Petrarch's and establish itself as exemplary. While Petrarch's literary *persona* tied the name of the lady (Laura) to a classical symbol of poetic glory (laurel), Du Bellay's *persona* uses the name of his lady (Olive) to transform Athena's branch—which is on the other hand one of the oldest symbols of Christian redemption—into a new mark of poetic glory. The goal of this *aemulatio* is to create and establish new aesthetic values.

Literary imitation in general and the imitation/emulation of Petrarch in particular is also an important issue in Joachim Du Bellay's *Deffence et illustration de la langue françoise*. According to the *Deffence*, *imitatio auctorum* is the foundation of linguistic achievement:

Se compose donq' celui qui voudra enrichir sa langue, à l'imitation des meilleurs auteurs Grecs & Latins [. . .] car il n'y a point de doute, que la plus grand' part de l'artifice ne soit continue en l'imitation [. . .].<sup>3</sup>

In chapter IV of the second book, 'Quel genre de poèmes doit élire le Poëte François', Du Bellay recalls this general rule and applies it more particularly to poetic achievement:

Ly donques, & rely premierement, ô poëte future, feuillete de main nocturne & iournelle, les exemplaires Grecz & Latins, puis me laisse toutes ces vieilles poesies Françoises [. . .] comme Rondeaux, Ballades, Virelaiz, Chants Royaux, Chansons, & autres telles epicerics, qui corrompent le goust de nostre langue, & ne seruent sinon à porter tesmoignage de nostre ignorance.<sup>4</sup>

Immediately after this statement, Du Bellay explains more concretely which literary genres and models the 'poëte future' has to choose. His list of exemplary authors includes only ancient *auctoritates* as Ovid, Tibullus, Propertius and Horace. But when he comes to the sonnet and exhorts to choose also this form ('Sonnet moy ces beaux sonnetz, non moins docte que plaisante inuention Italienne'),<sup>5</sup> Du Bellay states apodictically: 'Pour le Sonnet donc tu as Petrarque; & quelque mo-

<sup>3</sup> Du Bellay Joachim, *Les oeuvres françoises de Joachim Du Bellay, revues et de nouveau augmentées de plusieurs poésies non encore auparavant imprimées par J. de Morel et G. Aubert* (Paris: 1569) f. 10. URL (April 2005): <http://gallica.bnf.fr>.

<sup>4</sup> Du Bellay, *Les oeuvres françoises* f. 24.

<sup>5</sup> Du Bellay, *Les oeuvres françoises* f. 25.

dernes Italiens'.<sup>6</sup> Together with the (creative, emulating) imitation of the 'exemplaires Grecz & Latins', Petrarchist imitation is a pillar of Du Bellay's new literary and theoretical program of 1549.

Yet just a few years later, he resumes the rhetoric of refusal he already practiced in 'Je ne quiers pas la fameuse couronne' for a completely different purpose. In *Contre les Pétrarquistes*, we hear him criticizing Petrarchist imitation as a hollow and artificial savant game, and praising the 'good old French love poets' exactly for the blessed ignorance he condemned in the *Deffence*.<sup>7</sup>

Of course, no respectable 'seiziémiste' would simply take this change from 'friend' to 'foe' by the word. The intertextual thickness and paradoxical character of Du Bellay's *Contre les pétrarquistes* is too well known.<sup>8</sup> The litotes is quite transparently the grounding figure of the poem. In fact, Du Bellay imitates Petrarch by denying his intention to imitate him. However, as obvious as his game with Petrarchist tradition may seem to be, his verses convey a philosophical reflection on the matter of literary imitation which is all but self-evident.

*Contre les pétrarquistes* has a clear binary structure opposing two ranges of elements, framed by two contrary statements. At the beginning of the poem, the auctorial lyrical *persona* addresses his lady to tell her that he will not write her a petrarchist poem; at the end, he declares that he will, if she likes it better and wants to have one:

Si toutefois Pétrarque vous plaist mieux,  
Je reprendray mon chant mélodieux,  
Et voleray iusqu'au séjour des Dieux  
D'une æle mieux guidée (82).<sup>9</sup>

In between these sequences, critical portraits of how petrarchists act and write alternate with descriptions of how, on the contrary, the lyrical *persona* intends to write and behave.

J'ay oublié l'art de pétrarquizer.  
Je veulx d'Amour franchement deviser,  
Sans vous flatter, et sans me déguizer (71).

<sup>6</sup> Du Bellay, *Les oeuvres françaises* f. 25.

<sup>7</sup> All key citations are recorded and analysed below in this article.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Balsamo J., "«Nous l'avons tous admiré, et imité: non sans cause». Pétrarque en France à la Renaissance: un livre, un modèle, un mythe", in Balsamo, *Les poètes français de la Renaissance et Pétrarque* 29.

<sup>9</sup> All quotes are from Du Bellay Joachim, "Contre les pétrarquistes", in *Divers jeux rustiques*, ed. V.L. Saulnier (Genève: 1965) 71–82.



In the very first lines of the poem, the lyrical *persona* points out at two aspects: first, that he has 'forgotten the art' of imitating Petrarch; second, that this art, id est Petrarchist writing, is a *logos* which does not correspond to the *ethos* it seems to depict. Petrarchism is presented here as a form of discourse which is firstly and chiefly characterized by artful simulation and dissimulation.

In the following sequence, an *amplificatio* of the central thought expressed in the former lines, Du Bellay quotes and evokes a long series of petrarchist *loci communes*, unmasking them as artificial ethopoetical strategies, artful *integumenta* of a constitutive discrepancy between *logos* and *ethos*. Thus, Petrarchist lovers are described as those who fake affection ('n'ont pas le quart d'une vraie amitié') and cry false tears ('Jettent des larmes feintes'). Later on in this sequence Du Bellay uses a combination of parallelism and oxymoron, two of the central figures and perhaps the central figures of Petrarchist discourse, as a lever to unveil the artful artificiality of Petrarchist love lyrics:

Ce n'est que feu de leurs froides chaleurs,  
Ce n'est qu'horreur de leurs feintes douleurs,  
Ce n'est encor de leurs souspirs et pleurs,  
Que vent, pluye, et orages (71).

The initial sequence is evidently based upon the classical proceeding of *memoria verborum*. Du Bellay is doing nothing else than quoting and reproducing petrarchist *verba*. As it is well known, *memoria verborum* is the foundation stone of rhetorical and poetical *imitatio*. By using it so manifestly, our author demonstrates that he is imitating petrarchist discourse. At the same time however, and quite as overtly, he shows that he is doing so with the declared intention to criticize and to negate, not to make alike—which means in nuce: not to imitate. Thus, Du Bellay introduces a hiatus, a discontinuity between *memoria verborum* and imitation.

This gap immediately recalls a famous aspect of the theory of imitation which is traditionally related to the *topos* of the 'forgetful imitator' and refers back to the initial 'J'ai oublié' of the poem. In Seneca's famous letter 82 to Lucilius, one of the key texts of ancient imitation theory, the Latin author points out at the fact that a truly successful, valuable imitation does not necessarily imply the author's intention or even consciousness to imitate.<sup>10</sup> In *Contre les pétrarquistes*,

<sup>10</sup> Cf. De Rentii D., "Der Beitrag der Bienen. Überlegungen zum *Bienengleichnis* bei Seneca und Macrobius", *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 141 (1998) 30–44.

Du Bellay resumes this thought to present Petrarchism as a form of literary imitation which is fundamentally characterized by a discontinuity between the (auctorial) person inscribed in the text and the text itself. *Memoria verborum*, originally the first and foremost link between the acts of reading and writing and the final product of these acts (a new text) is broken in *Contre les pétrarquistes*: the text is beyond any doubt an imitation, whereas the act leading to its production is not.

This discontinuity prepares the dichotomy Du Bellay presents in the following sequence, resuming the theme of 'franchise': the dichotomy between *logos* and *ethos*. The lyrical *persona* asserts now that imitating petrarchist speech means 'appearing other than I am' ('sembler autre que je ne suis') and presenting the lady as what she is not, transforming her into a lifeless art object:

De voz deux yeux deux asters je ferois,  
 Voz blonds cheveux en or je changerois,  
 Et voz mains en ivoyre (73).

Du Bellay questions the ethical quality and—hereby—the philosophical dimension of Petrarchist love discourse, stating again and demonstrating that Petrarchism is a 'false' and 'fictional' *logos* which is not only separated from the true *ethos* and passions of the speaker, but also stands in clear opposition to both. The passions of the Petrarchist lover are 'vaines passions', 'belles fictions', 'peintures vaines':

Mais cest Enfer de vaines passions,  
 Ce Paradis de belles fictions,  
 Déguizemens de noz affections,  
 Ce sont peintures vaines:  
 Qui donnent plus de plaisir aux lisans  
 Que voz beautez à tous voz courtesans,  
 Et qu'au plus fol de tous ces bien-disans  
 Vous ne donnez de peines (74).

This means that Petrarchist *logos* generates a genuine aesthetical pleasure which is stronger than the feelings a lady can arouse in her lovers, and it does so exactly *because* it is fundamentally different from 'true life' and clearly separated from it. The beauty of the text not only is but also *has to be* fundamentally different from the beauty of the lady. Between these two forms of beauty lies an essential *hiatus*, an indispensable discontinuity.

Du Bellay is certainly not inventing this discontinuity (one only has to remember a little Ronsard to know), he is recalling it to reflect a very important consequence of Petrarchism, the separation of

person and text, and to demonstrate that it affects all personal instances involved in the process of literary creation.

After reaching this point, the first sequences are doubled and confirmed by a new list of Petrarchist *loci*. The central function of this second *amplificatio* is to show that Petrarchism and *imitatio auctorum* are one. Petrarchist lovers constantly strive to imitate not only their main model but also the ancient love *auctores* in general—Propertius, Ovid, Tibullus, Catullus:

Cestuy, voulant plus simplement aymer  
 Veult un Properse et Ovide exprimer,  
 Et voudroit bien encore se transformer  
 En l'esprit d'un Tibulle:  
 Mais cestuy-là, comme un Pétrarque ardent,  
 Cest autre après va le sien mignardant,  
 Comme un second Catulle (78).

From a critique of Petrarchism, the poem rises in the second half onto a more general level and aims at a fundamental critique of literary imitation. This critique is illustrated by a dichotomy opposing petrarchist models and 'old French models' of love discourse:

Noz bons Ayeulx, qui cest art démenoient,  
 Pour en parler, Pétrarque n'apprenoient,  
 Ains franchement leur Dame entretenoient  
 Sans fard ou couverture:  
 Mais aussi tost qu'Amour s'est faict sçavant,  
 Luy, qui estoit François au paravant,  
 Est devenu flatteur, et décevant,  
 Et de thusque nature (79).

Ergo: Being essentially nothing but poetical imitation, Petrarchist love discourse shows *per exemplum* that the humanist art of poetical imitation introduced by the 'modern' French authors stands constitutively in opposition to truthful speaking. To speak the truth one has to renounce to this art. The final and central dichotomy Du Bellay introduces in this penultimate sequence opposes nothing less than poetical *imitatio auctorum* and truth, leading to the logical conclusion that poetical imitation does not and cannot lead to the truth.

To prove and underline this, Du Bellay presents at the end of the poem a 'true' love discourse he would hold to his lady:

Mais quant a moy, sans feindre ny pleurer,  
 Touchant ce poinct, je vous puis asseurer,  
 Que je veulx sain et dispos demeurer  
 Pour vous faire service.

De voz beautez je diray seulement  
 Que si mon œil ne juge follement  
 Vostre beauté est joincte également  
 A vostre bonne grace:  
 De mon amour, que mon affection  
 Est arrivée à la perfection  
 De ce qu'on peult avoir de passion  
 Pour une belle face (82).

Of course, these lines are no 'degree zero' of love *écriture*. The combination of 'beauté' and 'bonne grace' is in fact one of the most common *topoi* of love discourse, and this is—especially at Du Bellay's times—too well known to assume that our author would seriously hope for his readers not to notice that he is just faking a non-imitative love discourse. The purposeful transparency of the fake prepares and unveils the last sequence of the poem showing between the lines that, in fact, even the plainest and least artful love discourse is not and cannot be free from literary imitation, whether one professes Petrarchism or not.

Consequently to this construction, the last lines of the poem do not convey a refusal of (Petrarchist) imitation, on the contrary:

Si toutefois Petrarque vous plaist mieux,  
 Je reprendray mon chant melodieux,  
 Et voleray jusqu'au séjour des Dieux  
 D'une æle mieux guide:  
 Là dans le sein de leurs divinitez,  
 Je choisiray cent mille nouveautez,  
 Dont je peindray voz plus grandes beautez  
 Sur la plus belle Idée (82).

The *memoria verborum* Du Bellay's *persona* has been practicing all throughout the poem does in the end—as ever—lead to imitation, and this imitation has all but little aesthetical value. According to Du Bellay, there is no constitutive dichotomy between petrarchism and literary originality. On the contrary, petrarchist imitation does not preclude the possibility and capability of creating 'one hundred thousand' new poetical *verba*. The issue in *Contre les pétrarquistes* is not opposing, negating or abolishing (Petrarchist) imitation, but exploring a very important philosophical consequence and implication of literary imitation.

At the end of his speech Du Bellay's lyrical *persona* states that he not only *can* use Petrarchist *logos* to create beautiful new love poems, but that he also *will*, if his lady (/reader) wants him to. At the same time, it follows from all that has been said up to this point that in

doing so the lyrical persona clearly and unmistakably will *not* seek or reach the truth. Thus, Du Bellay establishes a fundamental discontinuity between codified, sapient, imitative (and *per exemplum* Petrarchist) love discourse and the possibility of verbally reaching (telling/writing and hearing/reading) the truth.

At the same time—and here we reach the philosophical core of the matter—, the last lines of *Contre les pétrarquistes* state clearly that one *may* seek other things than the truth: If the lady wants Du Bellay's *persona* to tell her (petrarchist) lies, he will do so without hesitating or remorse.

Which means in sum: Truth itself is not the one and only thing one has to seek. It is not even what everyone necessarily wants to seek. In matters of love *and*—which is far more important—of literary imitation, truth is just an option.

The cultural and historical significance of this message can hardly be overestimated. In *Contre les pétrarquistes*, looking back on a long and strong tradition of poetical imitation, Joachim Du Bellay, who is one of the prominent theorists of literary imitation in Renaissance France, lays the finger on one of the major philosophical consequences of petrarchist and, generally, poetical imitation. He demonstrates that *imitatio auctorum* questions the status of truth as an absolute value.

Du Bellay's poem is neither a refusal of petrarchism nor a simple game with Petrarchist tradition, but a profound critique of imitation in the best philosophical sense of the word. Therefore, for us today, it is a fascinating document of the immense cultural and philosophical importance of Petrarchism in the Renaissance.

Far from counteracting his Petrarchist lyric and poetical manifesto, *Contre les Pétrarquistes* pursues and completes *per exemplum Petrarchae* the reflection on *imitatio auctorum* Du Bellay had conceived and formed in the *Deffence et illustration de la langue françoise*, showing once again, but this time in a surprising way, how very important the poet laureate was for Renaissance French literature.

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POETICAL AND POLITICAL READINGS OF PETRARCH'S  
*RIME* IN XVITH-CENTURY FRANCE:  
A CRITICAL REVALUATION

Jean Balsamo

Petrarch's *Rime* have continuously been read by French poets as a kind of competitive dialogue with the great Tuscan poet, who is represented as someone to vie with in poetry and love.<sup>1</sup> In a sort of palinode, Ronsard even goes so far as to deplore having read and quoted Petrarch.<sup>2</sup> But even if we succeed in carefully following the many poetic imitations and variations on Petrarch's texts, the very notes which have enabled or simplified the reading of the original Italian text are rarely known. We also have very little insight into the original reading experience and its reception. Ronsard's copy of Petrarch's *Rime*, for example, has not been found, even though we possess his annotated volume of *Rime Diversi*.<sup>3</sup> The French reception of Petrarch's *Rime* was legitimately confused with poetic usage and love discourse, and, to use André Chastel's expression, was allowed by 'a filtering of the original elements'.<sup>4</sup> The text's adaptations corresponded with the French culture's abilities to understand a foreign one, and especially with the needs of French contemporary politics.

*Books and their Readers*

In the 16th century, Petrarch was, in the end, identified with his *Rime*, as well as its numerous editions, to such a degree that there was a confusion between the title of the book and the name of its author,

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<sup>1</sup> On this dialogue, see my article "Pétrarque, Ronsard et quelques autres", in Collarile L. – Maira D. (eds.), *Nel Libro di Laura. Petrarca's Liebesgedichte in der Renaissance* (Basel: 2004) 117–141.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre de Ronsard, "Elégie à Cassandre", in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. P. Laumonier (Paris: 1923–1974) VI, 58.

<sup>3</sup> See Balsamo J., "Les poètes français et les anthologies lyriques italiennes", *Italiques* 5 (2002) 9–32.

<sup>4</sup> Chastel A, *L'Art français* (Paris: 1994) 310.



*Il Petrarca*. The Latin work was equally widespread but in a different geographical pattern. This editorial dimension has certainly nothing to do with the 'original Petrarch' inspiring philologists to nostalgia, rather it corresponds with an aspect of the reception of texts and illustrates the unequalled level of prestige which Petrarch enjoyed in European culture since the Renaissance. It partly explains how a modern classic became a real bestseller by a dynamic of its own.<sup>5</sup> As such, the analysis of its editorial history needs a particular approach. Even if the abundance of editions and the numbers of the preserved copies can clearly indicate the wideness of its circulation, the exact number of readers at the time remains of course imprecise and, if numbers have been given, they are contradictory. In sum, and without entering into details which have already been examined elsewhere, we must remember that the majority of the editions of Petrarch's oeuvre preserved in French libraries and private collections today, were not in France at that period. Also, if they were 16th-century books, they did not necessarily feature in French culture of that century. This means that Petrarch occupied a privileged, albeit limited position. Inventories and library catalogues rarely reveal the presence of such books—at least until 1580. A study carried out on a hundred Parisian inventories lists only six copies of moral works and the *Trionfi*, of which three were found in the library of one historian, Jean Le Ferron. No copies of the *Rime* were listed in these inventories.<sup>6</sup> Their absence in the libraries of the time needs to be explained: these contradictory results show the limits of any quantitative method in our understanding of the diffusion of classical works. The generality of the information to be gleaned from these inventories calls for particular attention to be paid to individual copies which will in turn register their uniqueness in the construction of an ever evolving history.

One 'emblematic image' will illustrate the reading reception of Petrarch by French readers in the 16th century. The painting, which bears no signature, dates from between 1533 and 1535 and has been attributed to Jean Clouet, the famous painter of the court of Francis

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<sup>5</sup> See Balsamo J., "Les implications éditoriales du pétrarquisme: quelques remarques sur les collections anciennes de Pétrarque conservées en France", in Blanc P. (ed.), *Pétrarque en Europe. XIV<sup>e</sup>–XX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: 2001) 87–98.

<sup>6</sup> See Doucet R., *Les bibliothèques parisiennes au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: 1956) 105–164; Schutz A.H., *Vernacular Books in Parisian Private Libraries of the Sixteenth Century according to the Notarial Inventories* (Chapel Hill: 1995).

I, who was acclaimed by Marot to be a 'second Michelangelo'.<sup>7</sup> This small half bust portrait depicts a gentleman dressed in black in a pensive mood. Whereas his right hand is gloved, his left hand is resting on a small closed book, or rather a barely closed book because of the undone laces of the binding. This binding is interesting: the leather is reddish-brown and it is visibly of Venetian origin as the style of the golden frames on the panel shows, along with the arabesque corner pieces and the central motif which is half covered by the finger of the reader. The binding bears the inscription 'PETRARCA' in golden capital letters. It is obviously a pocket-sized edition of the *Rime*, probably one of the 1521 or 1533 Aldine editions which precisely carried the generic title *Il Petrarca* and not *Opere volgari*. The Aldine workshop also produced this type of bindings bearing the name of the author on the flat panels, a binding which, ten years later, was imitated by French binders [Fig. 1].<sup>8</sup>

The sitter has not been identified with certainty. His clothes and his physical appearance indicate that he was a courtier, possibly Claude de Lorraine, the first duke of Guise, of whom Clouet left another fairly similar painting. The cultural importance of the painting is clear: by representing an important person of the court it displays Petrarch's book and introduces to France a pictorial tradition common in Florence. In portraying the image and the inscription, it presents Petrarch, or better the title of his book, as an 'emblem'. In this way, it stands for two things: on the one hand, it illustrates the union between the military and the arts ('*marte et arte*') promoted by Francis I, and, on the other hand, it represents the new secular and poetic 'magisterium' carried out by the Italian poet at the French court.

Even if this portrait illustrates the 'Petrarchan movement' in the court culture of Francis I, I do not intend to discuss Petrarchism and its spread at French court. Nor will I deal with the 'reading' of Petrarch as carried out by French poets from Marot to Desportes, or the editorial dimension of the phenomenon which confirms the

<sup>7</sup> Jean Clouet, *Portrait d'homme au Pétrarque*, c. 1533–1535, oil on pannel, 38, 5 x 32, 8 mm—Windsor Castle, England.

<sup>8</sup> See Quilici P., "La legatura aldina", in Santoro M. (ed.), *La stampa in Italia nel Cinquecento. Atti del Convegno* (Roma: 1992) I, 377–400, especially 394. Further precisions and illustrations by Le Bars F., "A propos de trois publications récentes et de reliures vénitiennes du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle inédites", *Bulletin du Bibliophile*, 1 (2004) 7–62. None of them records any binding carrying the title 'Petrarca'.

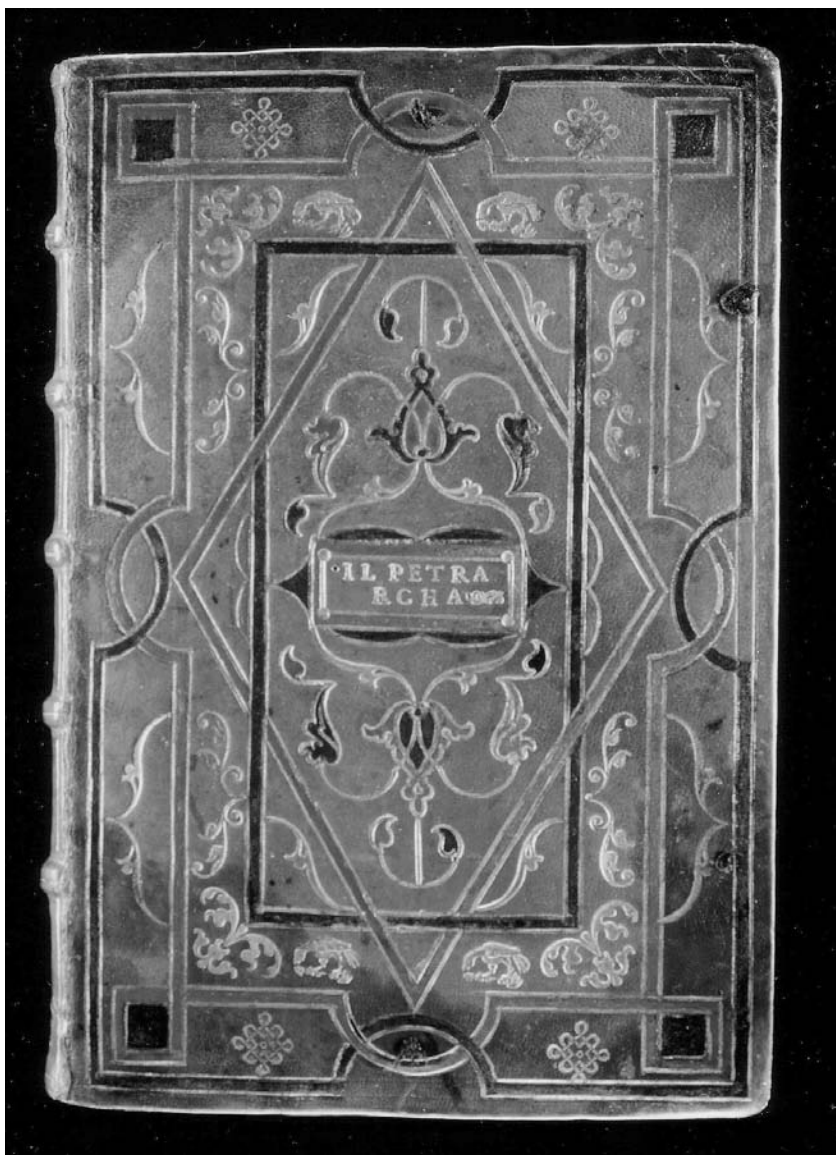


Fig. 1. *Il Petrarca* (Venice, G. Giolito de' Ferrari: 1547). Contemporary Parisian binding attributed to the 'Pecking Crow Binder', Geneva, Fondation Barbier-Mueller.

presence of the book in the painting. Rather I would like to re-examine the portrait and discuss the visible suggestions that it offers about the French reading methods applied to the reading of Petrarch. As regards the so-called 'emblem' that it represents, I would like to emphasise the image of the reader, be it an anonymous reader whose reading is interrupted, or the ostentatious display of a book as an essential status symbol. We will probably never know what Clouet's gentleman was thinking when he closed his Petrarch. In this sense the book remains 'closed' forever, the particular reading that its first owner made remains a mystery. Yet, thanks to some documents and examples, it is possible to shed some light on the subject.

There are two later, well-known examples. The first is what one could call a basic linguistic reading. In 1545, Maurice Scève procured a new edition of the *Rime*, printed in Lyon [Fig. 2]. Another poet from Lyon, Pontus de Tyard, possessed a copy which he had annotated himself.<sup>9</sup> Tyard wrote down words which he did not understand ('vendetta', 'però', 'chiamar', 'raddoppia', etc.), and he tried to translate the first eleven lines of the sonnet *Era il giorno, ch' al Sol si scoloraro* (RVF 3) into prose. His translation shows his poor command of the Italian language and equally demonstrates how difficult it was to translate Petrarch. In the *Rime*, he encountered a foreign language pretty much the same way he would experiment a new form of poetry. Thirty years later, Montaigne would offer an entirely personal, comprehensive and mastered reading of Petrarch's lyrical works in his *Essais* [Fig. 3]. In the former, we have an almost utilitarian reading, commonly supported by a lot of widely accepted evidence. In the latter, we are faced with the most refined form of a personal and cultivated reading. Between Tyard and Montaigne, the basic linguistic reading of one writer compared to the poetic musings of another, a practically oriented poetry emerges which gives rise to the possibility of a lyrical reading of a 'French Petrarch', and to a lesser known ideological reading, which obviously engages in political and religious questions.

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<sup>9</sup> Saulnier V.-L. "Maurice Scève et Pontus de Tyard. Deux notes sur le pétrarquisme de Pontus", *Revue de littérature comparée* 22 (1948) 267–272.



Fig. 2. *Il Petrarca* (Lyon, J. de Tournes: 1545). Robert II Estienne's copy, bearing an *ex-dono* by the Venetian noblewoman Vienna di Barozzi, Venice, May 3, 155[?]. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal.



Fig. 3. *Il Petrarca* (Lyon, G. Rouillé: 1550). Montaigne's copy, Paris, BNF.



*The Royal Petrarch*

The *Trionfi* found a wide readership at the court of Charles VII and Louis XII. This can first be discerned by the numerous preserved manuscripts, some of which were beautifully illustrated and once belonged to royal collections. So, at least three translations exist, all of them ordered by lords or sovereigns. Petrarch was thus read in translated and commented form and was considered a 'moral philosopher' or a collector of historical *exempla*. Moreover, the knowledge of his humanist work also contributed to a fruitful *rapprochement* between Christianity and ancient wisdom during the first half of the 16th century and introduced princes and the well-read to a Roman model of glory and fame. Petrarch's presence in court milieus, however, was stronger with Francis I for the king himself was a poet and very early on he read and imitated the *Rime* along with the *Trionfi*, the allegorical work presented in the Simon Bourgoing version.<sup>10</sup> Two particular translations are attributed to Francis; one was a fourteen line poem, adapted from the sonnet *Cesare poi che 'l traditor d'Egitto* (RVF 102). This simple exercise of translation into French, roughly recreated the pattern of Italian rimes, yet without a full understanding of the concept of the sonnet which was still unknown in France at that time. There was also a rondeau which presented a version of the sonnet *Benedetto sia 'l giorno e 'l mese et l'anno* (RVF 61) which he organised around the refrain 'Bien heureuse'.<sup>11</sup> These works were followed by other royal compositions, which show a combination of elements drawn from Petrarch and other verses imitating Serafino or Chariteo. The king also drew topical issues and metaphors from the *Rime*, such as that of the famous image of the ship in the storm, without following the Italian text to the letter, 'En la grand mer, où tout vent tourne et vire'. He increased this poetic activity while in captivity in Madrid, where poetry served as a pastime and the lyrical poetry permitted a refined form of gallantry.<sup>12</sup>

Poetry in vernacular language responded in turn to the princely tradition, especially in the case of the Valois dynasty. The link with Petrarch, in the largest sense of the word, helped to renew the polit-

<sup>10</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, ms 6480. This manuscript, in calligraphic writing, was produced for the king c. 1522.

<sup>11</sup> Francis I, *Œuvres poétiques*, ed. J.E. Cane (Geneva: 1984) 81 and 253.

<sup>12</sup> See Kane J.E., "L'italianisme dans l'œuvre poétique de François Ier", *Studi francesi* 84 (1984) 485-494.

ical ambitions of France in Italy. In a famous letter Giovanni Pico della Mirandola celebrated Lorenzo de' Medici by portraying him as a prince and as an heir to Petrarch and Dante, whom he surpassed. In order to celebrate the literary culture to which Francis I was dedicated, the historiographer Arnoul Le Feron used similar terms to portray the king of France as a reader and as a new heir to Petrarch.

Rythmos quidem Gallicos ea concinnitate Rex edebat, ut nec fluere rotundius, nec cadere numerosius, nec cohærere aptius ullo pacto possent, dubitarentque qui eo in genere versati sunt, an res verbis, an verba sententiis magis illustrarentur. Atque ita amatoris lusibus philosophorum severitatem permiscebat, ut illi hinc auctoritatem, hæc illinc hilaritatem precario accepisse videri possent; totumque Francisci Petrarchæ *myrothecion*, ac nonnihil etiam Dantis Aligerii pigmenta consumpsisse viderentur, tametsi obscuritatem in his critici interdum reprehenderint.<sup>13</sup>

That same reference sheds light on Francis I's ambition to create a careful image of himself as both a prince and a poet, as both the king of France and an Italian prince. He acclaimed the benefits of a true mastery of Italian literature and its symbolic heritage.<sup>14</sup> This mastery was accompanied by French political ambitions in the Peninsula. A sonnet composed in 1544 by Mellin de Saint-Gelais 'put into the Petrarca copy belonging to the late lord the Duke of Orléans', evoked precisely these same stakes:

A qui pourroit ce langage seoir mieulx  
Qu'à vous, qui seul au monde avez donné  
Certain espoir de vous veoir couronné  
Roy d'Italie hault et victorieux.

Donc lisez avec heureux presaigne  
Le los de Laure, espérant par vos faictz  
De verd laurier les honneurs plus parfaictz.<sup>15</sup>

By identifying himself with Petrarch and by making himself the point of reference for Petrarchan translation into French, the king introduced less of an italianization of his court than a sort of *translatio studii*.

<sup>13</sup> Le Feron A., *De rebus gestis Gallorum libri IX* (Paris: 1555) 170. See Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's epistle to Lorenzo de' Medici (in his *Opera* (Paris: 1517) VII). The expression 'Petrarchæ myrothecion' is a borrowing from Cicero, *Epistolæ ad Atticum* 2, 1: 'Isocratis myrothecion'. See Dorez L., "François Ier et la *Commedia*", in *Dante. Recueil d'études publiées pour le VI<sup>e</sup> centenaire du poète* (Paris: 1921) 107–123.

<sup>14</sup> On Francis I's italianism, see Picot E., *Les Italiens en France au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Bordeaux: 1918), now recently reissued by N. Ordine (Rome: 1995) 148–161, and Knecht R.J., *Renaissance Warrior and Patron. The Reign of Francis I* (Cambridge: 1992) 461–469.

<sup>15</sup> Saint-Gelais Mellin de, *Sonnets*, ed. L. Zilli (Geneva: 1990) 16.



This first step would herald the coming of the necessary *translatio imperii*, which Valois would never give up, despite their ever worsening political situation. The Italian culture of the king corresponded with his political goals, which were now formulated in poetical terms.

The poetical and symbolic link with Petrarch's poetry was maintained at the court of Francis I by Luigi Alamanni, a Florentine exile, who was both a poet and an agent of the king responsible for the consolidation of the partisan network of the French court on the Peninsula. Alamanni published two volumes of *Opere toscane* (Lyon: Gryphius, 1532–1533), which the king generously financed. The collection opened with a Petrarchan emblem of a salamander of which the motto 'Nutrisco et extinguo' in reference to the verse 'Di mia morte mi pasco e vivo in fiamme'.<sup>16</sup> It was entirely dedicated to the glory of Francis I, to whom he offered a *canzoniere* and almost 250 love and encomiastic sonnets. The praise for the king was enriched by many references to Petrarch's text. The honourable sonnets such as *Glorioso Francesco, in cui risplende* and *Glorioso Francesco, in cui si sente*, were variations of the *incipit* of the sonnet *Gloriosa Columna, in cui s'appoggia* (RVF 10). These works, amongst others, show the possibilities and the richness of the topics of Alamanni's repertoire which he first offered in Italian with a French styled presentation.<sup>17</sup>

The king's relationship to Petrarch was more than just one of his many pleasures. The turning point which it experienced around 1533 is clearly illustrated in the painting by Jean Clouet. That same year several copies of the new Petrarch Aldine edition, which was published in Venice in June, were sent to the court. One of them, including Giambattista Castiglione's *I luoghi difficili del Petrarca*, was rebound for the king's private library [Fig. 4].<sup>18</sup> Towards the end of the sum-

<sup>16</sup> See Lecoq A.-M., *François Ier imaginaire. Symbolique et politique à l'aube de la Renaissance française* (Paris: 1987) 82.

<sup>17</sup> Alamanni Luigi, *Opere toscane* (Lyon: 1532–1533) I, 195; II, 246. On Alamanni's French career, see Hauvette H., *Un exilé florentin à la cour de France au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: Luigi Alamanni* (Paris: 1903); on Alamanni's Petrarchism, see Mazzacurati G., *Rinascimento in transito* (Rome: 1996) 89–112.

<sup>18</sup> See Kimball Brooker T., "Bindings commissioned for Francis I's Italian Library", *Bulletin du Bibliophile*: (1997) 33–91. The king's private library was different from the Royal Library in Blois and Fontainebleau. This one contained four Petrarch incunable editions brought back from Naples by Charles VIII, see Baurmeister U., "D'Amboise à Fontainebleau: les imprimés italiens dans les collections royales aux XV<sup>e</sup> et XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles", in Balsamo J. (ed.), *Passer les Monts. Français en Italie—L'Italie en France (1494–1525)* (Paris: 1998) 361–386.

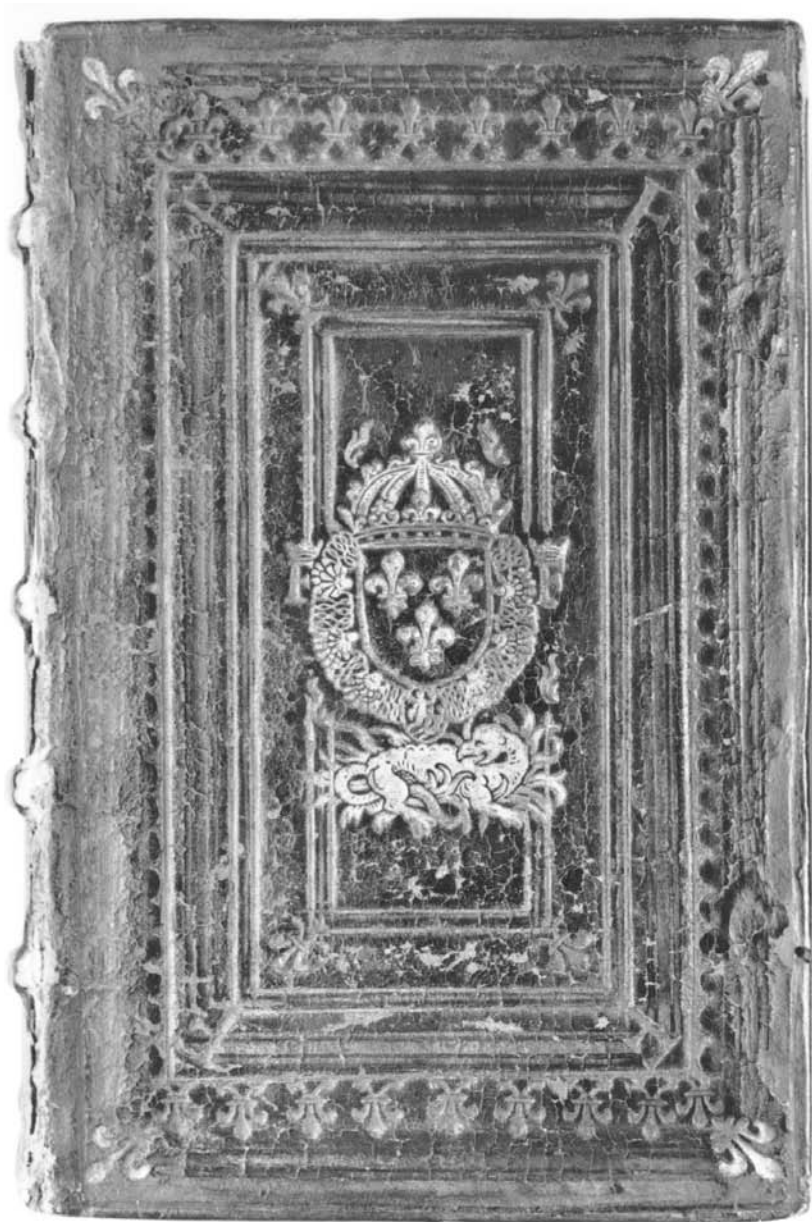


Fig. 4. *Il Petrarca* (Venice, heirs of Aldo: 1533). Francis I's copy, binding, Paris, BNF.

mer the king and the court went to Marseille to celebrate the marriage of the Dauphin with Catherine de Médicis and to meet the Pope. They break the journey with a stay in Avignon from the 29th of August to the 11th of September. It is there that the famous episode of the 'discovery' of the so-called tomb of Laura, by Maurice Scève, takes place, on the 8th of September in the Sainte-Croix chapel, in the convent of Saint-Francis. For this occasion Francis I composed an epitaph 'En petit lieu compris'.<sup>19</sup> It is only later that we hear in detail about this event and the ceremony that ensued. But rather than focusing on the (false) discovery of a false tomb, we should consider the importance of the consequences of the scene, a scene from which both the memory of Petrarch and the king benefited. This French memory of Petrarch can appear as a clear allusion to the king's Florentine politics and was the symbolic response combined by Alamanni to the manoeuvres of the Archbishop of Avignon, Ippolito de' Medici, and pope Clement VII, also a member of the De' Medici-family. All the glory of the event reflected on the king.<sup>20</sup>

The discovery, or rather the invention of Laura's tomb and the epitaph composed by the king, became itself the reason for a poetic competition which once again spread the new image of the king as Petrarch and founded the French celebration of poetry. Marot mentions the event in his epigram *Du Roy et de Laure* as he briefly celebrates the tomb which the king edified and the homage which he paid to Laura. In an enigmatic style the last two verses of the poem confirm the interest which the king showed in Petrarch:

O Laure, Laure, il t'a esté besoing  
 D'aymer l'honneur, et estre vertueuse,  
 Car François Roy (sans cela) n'eust prins soing  
 De t'honorer de tombe sumptueuse,  
 Ne d'employer sa dextre valeureuse  
 A par escript ta louange coucher:  
 Mais il l'a faict pour aultant qu'amoureuse  
 Tu as esté de ce qu'il tient plus cher.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *Il Petrarca*, ed M. Scève (Lyon: 1545) 8.

<sup>20</sup> See Giudicci, "Bilancio d'un annosa questione: Maurice Scève e la 'scoperta' della 'tomba' di Laura", *Quaderni di filologia e lingue romanze*, 2 (1980) 3–70. On a new interpretation of this invention as a matter of memory, see Millet O., "Le tombeau de la morte et la voix du poète: la mémoire de Pétrarque en France autour de 1533", in *Regards sur le passé dans l'Europe des XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Bern: 1997) 183–195.

<sup>21</sup> Marot Clément, "Second livre des épigrammes" 12, in *Œuvres poétiques*, ed. G. Delfaux (Paris: 1993) II, 250.

Victor Brodeau translated and amplified a Latin distich thanks to Cardinal Jean de Lorraine, who, at that time, worked for the protector of Italian literature at the court. In this piece, Laura speaks highly of the king, who, in contrast with the Italian poet, honours her in a disinterested way:

A deux François suys beaucoup redevable,  
Mais je confesse à celuy plus devoir,  
Qui sans espoir de moy nul bien avoir,  
Par sa vertu rend la myenne honorable.<sup>22</sup>

That same year, Mellin de Saint-Gelais in turn composed an eight-line poem *Sur le sépulchre de Madame Laure refaict par le roy en Avignon*. The poem gives an account of this memorial gesture and bestows it with a meaning:

Ce sépulchre est la restauration  
Des grandz honneurs que Laure a mérité,  
D'un clair esprit seure approbation,  
Donnant aux vieux foy et autorité.  
C'est d'un parfait l'œuvre en perfection  
Pour mettre un doute en la posterité  
Lequel doibt plus au grand François monarque:  
Ou nous, ou Laure, ou bien François Petrarque.<sup>23</sup>

Uniting the two *personae* of Francis, 'François monarque' and 'François Pétrarque', in a rime, Saint-Gelais reversed the relationship and made Petrarch into the posthumous debtor of the king. Finally, in 1538, Nicolas Bourbon published a Latin version of the epitaph in his *Nugae*, which he attributed to Petrarch himself. Still, there were more poets who contributed to this celebration, in French, Italian or Latin: Guillaume Bochetel, Gabriele Simeoni, Giulio Camillo, Salmon Macrin, Louis Aleaume, Benedetto Tagliacarne, and even Alamanni.

It is in this same context that Marot composed his *Chant des Visions*, a translation of Petrarch's canzone *Standomi un giorno solo* (RVF 323).<sup>24</sup> This piece, which was in fact the first of a real Petrarchan anthology composed in the immediate entourage of Francis I between 1533 and

<sup>22</sup> Brodeau Victor, *Poésies*, ed. H.M. Tomlinson (Geneva: 1982) 124.

<sup>23</sup> Saint-Gelais M. de, *Œuvres poétiques françaises*, ed. D. Stone jr (Paris: 1995) II, 212.

<sup>24</sup> Marot, 'Chant des visions de Petrarque translâté de Italien en François', "La Suite de l'Adolescence", in *Œuvres poétiques* (Paris: 1993) I, 347–349. See Balsamo J., "Marot et les origines du pétrarquisme français (1530–1540)", in Defaux G. (ed.), *Clément Marot* (Paris: 1996) 323–337.

1540, inaugurated a rich flow of translations from Italian. This same poem, combined with a version of the *Trionfi* by Maynier d'Oppède, featured in the 1538 collection of Petrarchan poetry, the first ever published in France.<sup>25</sup> Maynier, who had already read the 'livre des remedes de fortune', used his excellent knowledge of the moral Florentine poet for a clearly encomiastic intention. It was destined for the triumphant reinstatement of a glorious captain, in this case Anne de Montmorency, to whom the book was dedicated and to whom it was presented when he was nominated constable. The manuscript of the dedication is well known.<sup>26</sup>

Through the eminent politics displayed at the discovery of Laura's tomb, a discovery which would be detailed in editions of the *Rime* for many of the following decades, the two Francis—the king and Petrarch—, became decisively linked: the king was heir and successor of the famous Tuscan poet whom he celebrated. Again in 1574, a French traveller visiting Petrarch's tomb in Arquà, remembered the Avignon episode and copied the verses of Francis I into his own diary and added a full commentary. The celebration of Petrarch in these places was a pretext for a nostalgic celebration of the 'grand roy François, père des lettres et amateur des hommes doctes'.<sup>27</sup>

This 'royal Petrarch' was in fact widespread outside court and its image directed the first French reading of the poet. One lesser known example might be revealing here. A gentleman from Arles, Lanteaume de Romieu, left a few hand-written annotations on his own copy of the edition commented by Vellutello, published in Venice in 1545.<sup>28</sup> Romieu was himself a well-read poet, translator, historian and author of a treatise on the antiquities of Arles which remained in manuscript form. He clearly situated his reading of Petrarch in the meeting of two traditions. On the flyleaves of his copy, he beautifully transcribed in calligraphy four pieces related to the episode of the discovery of Laura's tomb: the sonnet *Qui riposan quei caste et felice ossa*, a four-verses poem attributed to Petrarch himself, *Mortal Bellezza*,

<sup>25</sup> *Les Triumphe Petrarque* (Paris: 1538–1539). On this version, see Cifarelli P., "Jean Maynier d'Oppède et Pétrarque" in Balsamo J. (ed.) *Les Poètes français de la Renaissance et Pétrarque* (Geneva: 2004) 85–104.

<sup>26</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (ms F. fr. 20020); see *La Bibliothèque d'Anne de Montmorency*, exhibition catalogue (Ecouen: 1991) 2.

<sup>27</sup> Audebert N., *Voyage d'Italie*, ed. A. Olivero (Rome: 1981) 1, 204–206.

<sup>28</sup> *Il Petrarca* (Venice: 1545). A description of the Lanteaume de Romieu's copy is given in the *Catalogue de la Librairie Henner* (Paris: 1990) no. 147.

two epitaphs composed by Francis I, the one which is well known and which he took from the De Tournes' edition of the *Rime* (Lyon: 1545), *En petit lieu compris*, along with another piece of uncertain origin, *O Laure, Laure, il t'a esté besoing*. The Petrarch which Romieu read was literally, as he indicated on the first page, 'The Petrarch of François I'. It was the Petrarch which the king had praised and which had also been used to praise himself [Fig. 5]. However, Romieu found that this royal Petrarch also crossed with a provincial Petrarch, which had lived in well known places, a hero of local history of which he himself was a historian. At the same moment these two interests also guided Vasquin Philieul, author of the first complete translation of the *Rime* which aimed to celebrate the French crown in the person to whom the book was dedicated, Catherine de Médicis, and the illustrations of Avignon. The summaries which introduced each poem showed the provincial dimension by naming people and places. The introductory epistle celebrated the new 'cooperation between the two languages', that is to say the political union between France and Florence:

Car tout ainsy qu'as ta cité fleurie  
 Quitté pour France avoir en seigneurie:  
 Aussy Petrarque aura nouveau renom  
 Quand il sera François dessoubz ton nom  
 [. . .]  
 Pensez vous point en lisant tant d'escriptz,  
 Que cela soit prognostication,  
 Signifiant des cieulx l'intention,  
 De veoir ainsi par un clement destin  
 Joinct au François l'ancien Florentin?<sup>29</sup>

Vasquin Philieul followed the same arguments which Jean Lemaire de Belges had formulated for Louis XII and which renewed the royal propagandists at the moment of the succession of Henri II. In the same way, Jacques Peletier, who had translated 12 Petrarchan sonnets in the previous year 1547, imagined a prosopopeia of the queen 'addressing Italy':

Affin que soit de France et d'Italie  
 Un seul Royaume, une Reine et un Roy.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Philieul Vasquin, *Laure d'Avignon* (Paris: 1548) A2v.

<sup>30</sup> Peletier du Mans Jean, *Les Œuvres poétiques* (Paris: 1547) 89v.



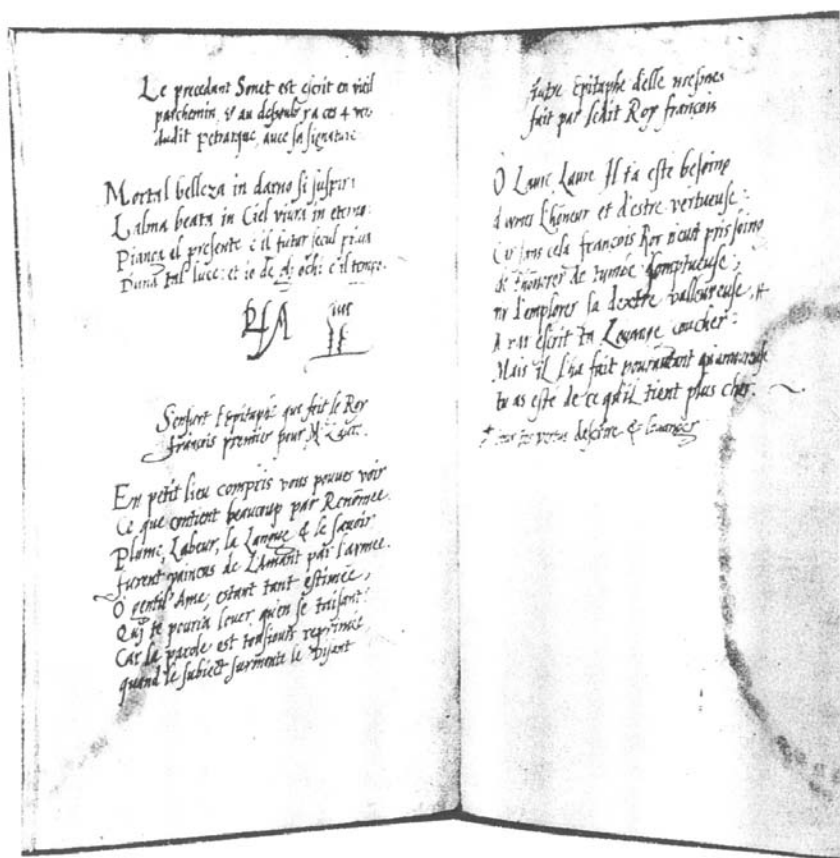


Fig. 5. *Il Petrarca* (Venice, G. Giolito de' Ferrari: 1545). Lanteaume de Romieu's copy, end fly-leaves bearing a manuscript transcription of Francis I's epitaph of Laura, Paris, private collection.

Hence Petrarch sponsored a sort of mystic union, fulfilling an old imperial dream of the kings of France, which considered his *Rime* as being fit for royal reading.<sup>31</sup> Again in 1580, Henri III translated Petrarch with the help of Jacopo Corbinelli, which caused the ironic approval of the Tuscan ambassador.<sup>32</sup> I recently found the king's copy of the *Rime* [Fig. 6].<sup>33</sup>

### *The Protestant Reading*

The royal reading was continued by a polemic use of Petrarch's poetry in French with a Gallican perspective and in the ideological terms of the *translatio*. Du Bellay reinterpreted in these new terms the canzone *Standomi un giorno solo a la finestra*, which had already been translated by Marot and was an introductory piece of the formerly 'royal Petrarch'. He himself directed this piece in order to create the painting of Rome awaiting its *renovatio*.<sup>34</sup> The reading of Petrarch was fragmented according to the various methods of assimilating texts in the 16th century, i.e. selective and anthological in a culture which based its reading and writing on common places, which sifts through, selects and restructures, according to a new discourse and a new intention which was in most cases far removed from the original text.

François Rasse des Neux, a surgeon in the service of Charles IX and Henry III, was also a reader of Petrarch. He was known at this time for his beautiful library which contained many hundreds of books, several of which were in Italian. It also contained an exceptional collection of leaflets, *pasquinate* and satirical pieces of every sort.<sup>35</sup> Two copies of Petrarch belonging to Des Neux are preserved

<sup>31</sup> See Graham W.E., "Gabriel Simeoni et le rêve impérial des rois de France", in Terreaux L. (ed.), *Culture et pouvoir au temps de Marguerite de Savoie* (Paris-Geneva: 1978) 299–309.

<sup>32</sup> Canestrini G., *Négociations diplomatiques entre la France et la Toscane* (Paris: 1859–1886) IV, 334 and 357.

<sup>33</sup> *Il Petrarca* (Lyon: 1574); limp vellum, coat of arms of Henry III—Niort, Médiathèque municipale (Rés. 8° 4437).

<sup>34</sup> Gadoffre G., *Du Bellay et le sacré* (Paris: 1978) 151–183.

<sup>35</sup> See Veyrin-Forrier J., "Un collectionneur peu connu, François Rasse des Neux, chirurgien parisien", in *Studia bibliographica in honorem Hermann de la Fontaine Verwey* (Amsterdam: 1966) 389–417; ead., "Un collectionneur engagé, François Rasse des Neux", in *La Lettre et le Texte* (Paris: 1987) 423–477, and, more particularly, ead., "Provenances italiennes dans la bibliothèque de François Rasse des Neux", in *Libri, tipografi, biblioteche. Ricerche storiche dedicate a Luigi Balsamo* (Florence: 1997) 385–398.





Fig. 6. *Il Petrarca* (Lyon, G. Rouillé: 1574). Henry III's copy, binding, limp vellum, golden coat of arms on pannels, Niort, Médiathèque.

today. One is the Brucioli edition, published in Venice in 1548, and the other is an edition published in Lyon in 1550, which contains the same annotations.<sup>36</sup> The first volume was bought only in 1575 while the second was donated by a Parisian bookseller in 1558 [Fig. 7]. If both copies bear the signature of Des Neux and the date of acquisition, none of them bears any hand-quotations. Nevertheless, it is possible to reconstitute Rasse des Neux's reading of Petrarch in consulting the surgeon's own quotations in a manuscript in which he transcribed the works of various poets, in French and sometimes in Italian. Among various pieces we encounter Petrarch's Christian sonnet of taking leave of the world *I' vo' piangendo i miei passati tempi* (RVF 365), which is accompanied by an attempt to translate it into French.<sup>37</sup> The majority of these pieces were composed for personal use or to circulate among close friends. Des Neux drew notes from his books which could be of use to him or to others in the political and religious battles of his time. He added poems about Rome to other poems against the Guise family and against the paganism of modern French poets. In fact, the king's surgeon was a Protestant and he transcribed works of Petrarch deliberately, calling them 'Petrarch's sonnets against Rome'. As such he transcribed *Fiamma dal ciel, L'avara Babilonia, Fontana di dolore* (RVF 136–138) which were preceded by the sonnet *De l'empia Babilonia* (RVF 114), a sonnet which he had transcribed into another notebook as well. Since 1559, these works were subject to Roman censure.<sup>38</sup> Their reinstatement combined with other kinds of reference was going to be topical in polemical Protestant texts of the time. As such the Protestant Italophobia was able to nurture its grievances by the use of great Italian authors reinstated.<sup>39</sup>

In 1585, pope Sixtus V excommunicated Henry of Navarre by the bull *Ab immensa aeterni regis potentia*. Catholics and Protestants jointly protested about the papal mismanagement of French affairs. The jurist

<sup>36</sup> Francesco Petrarca, *Sonetti, canzoni et triumphi*, ed. A. Brucioli (Venice: 1548). Des Neux' copy was sold in Monaco, Sotheby's, 7 October 1980, no. 1913. *Il Petrarca* (Lyon: 1550), Des Neux' copy, is now in Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (Rés. p. Yd. 170). It bears the following dedication: 'Dono dedit Rassio W. Barbeus'.

<sup>37</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (ms. F. fr. 25560).

<sup>38</sup> See Cerrón Puga, "Censure incrociate fra Italia e Spagna: il caso di Petrarca (1559–1747)", *Critica del testo* 6 (2003) 221–256.

<sup>39</sup> See Balsamo J. "Les lieux communs de l'italophobie en France à la fin du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Travaux de Littérature* 17 (2004) 273–287.



Fig. 7. *Il Petrarca* (Lyon, G. Rouillé: 1550). François Rasse de Neux' copy, Paris, BNF.

Francis Hotman cleverly responded to the bull in his *Brutum fulmen*, by referring to Petrarch's *Sine nomine* and some other Italian authors who wrote against the Roman court:

Comme si en cette ville qui est le repaire de toute sorte d'impureté, on ne contrevenoit point à l'ordonnance de Dieu: Pétrarque toutefois, Mantuan, Sanazare et plusieurs autres Italiens l'appellent boutique de toutes meschanceté, Babylone, Sodome, escole d'erreur, temple d'hérésie et putain effrontée.<sup>40</sup>

This collection of polemical quotes belongs to a long Florentine tradition which was codified since the end of the 15th century before being used by the Protestant polemicists. Johann Sleidan had already appealed to Petrarch in his *De quatuor summis imperiis libri tres* (Strasbourg, 1556) to denounce the 'meretricem babilonicam'.<sup>41</sup> In a more precise manner in 1586, a French gentleman, François Perrot, former collaborator of the ambassador Arnaud du Ferrier in Venice, extended the cause of the king of Navarre and responded to the bull in his work *Aviso piacevole dato alla bella Italia*. He proposed a new anthology of anti-Roman excerpts drawn from the three greatest figures in Italian literature, Petrarch, Boccaccio and Dante. His work which was published under the false address 'Monaco, appresso Giovanni Swartz', actually came from the London press of John Wolfe with whom Rasse des Neux entertained contacts. According to the precise indication of the editor, the extracts of the *Rime* were: 'cavati dal testo del Petrarca d'Aldo nel 1514', it concerned the first four verses of the sonnet *De l'empia Babilonia* and the Avignon sonnets which were transcribed in full.<sup>42</sup> Perrot amplified the polemical use of these works by offering six new sonnets of his own invention which acted as *riposte*, as answer to Petrarch's, of which he kept the *rime* by offering a variation on the *incipit*:

- *Fiamma dal Ciel vien via. Fuggir non giova*
- *L'avara Roma havrà l'ultimo scacco*

<sup>40</sup> Hotman F., *Protestation et defense pour le roy de Navarre. Traduit du latin intitulé Brutum Fulmen* (s.l.: 1587) 234.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Bertelli S., *Ribelli, libertini e ortodossi nella storiografia barocca* (Florence: 1973) 42.

<sup>42</sup> [Perrot F.], *Aviso piacevole dato alla bella Italia* (Monaco: Swartz [London: J. Wolfe], 1586) 27v–32. On Perrot, see Picot E., *Les Français italianisants au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: 1901) 1, 325–380, and Balsamo J. "Dante, *L'Aviso piacevole* et Henri de Navarre", *Italique* 1 (1998) 79–94.

- *Fontana di dolor, il tempo hor gira*
- *Fiamma dal Ciel (tempo è) piover io veggio*
- *L'avara Babilonia (il sacco è pieno/ Di vitii horrendi)*
- *Fontana di dolor già fos' tu al mondo/ Roma.*

The last sonnet ends with a remark against Rome and an invocation to Petrarch, the prophet of its ruin:

Onde sommersa infin vada tua Barca,  
Chi faccia vero il dir del tuo Petrarca,  
Et coi suoi tre questi sonetti sei.

Following this remark, the three sonnets were put forward as three Latin passages drawn from epistles, which had been translated and commented on. Perrot finally added 51 Italian sonnets, free poetical paraphrases of his entire anti-Roman *corpus* which summarised the title in one eloquent expression in the form of an acrostic given to the sonnet *Roma*: 'Radix Omnia Malorum Avaritia'.<sup>43</sup> This anthology of anti-pontifical texts, in which the Avignon sonnets of Petrarch figure, offered the material for a new invention. Thus, it provided the testimony needed to demonstrate the indignity of the popes. This testimony was based on a supposedly more valid authority than modern French writings, thus proving in an eloquent fashion that Sixtus V's decision was religiously iniquitous and not in narrow political terms, because Rome was the city of greed and the Antichrist. It was used to discover the true faith, capable of saving France which was caught up in civil wars the pope was accused of supporting, and also of saving Italy which was itself caught in the tyranny of St. Peter's successors. One generation later, Petrarch, together with Dante and Machiavelli, was still being quoted in the *Mystère d'iniquité* of Du Plessis Mornay.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> [Perrot F.], *Aviso piacevole* 56v.

<sup>44</sup> Du Plessis-Mornay Ph., *Le Mystère d'iniquité, c'est à dire l'histoire de la Papauté* (Saumur: 1611) 419–420. On the use and reassessment of Machiavelli by French Protestant writers, see Balsamo J., "Un livre escrit du doigt de Satan". La découverte de Machiavel et l'invention du machiavélisme en France au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle", in De Courcelles D. (ed.), *Le Pouvoir des Livres à la Renaissance*, Etudes et rencontres de l'Ecole des Chartes 3 (Paris: 1998) 77–92.

*Conclusion*

We can notice that, from the very start, the satirical sonnets of Petrarch had a strange fortune in France. It is without doubt that Vasquin Philieul excluded them from his official version. But Pontus de Tyard, who had also shown interest in these works, grouped them with a pen-mark in the table of contents in his own copy. Nearly a half-century later, in 1593, in a small anonymous collection entitled *Angéliques amours*, we read the translation of the three Avignon sonnets alongside a narrative piece of fiction in prose style. The works are attributed to Charles II of Luxembourg, the count of Brienne, who had perhaps composed them as an exercise or as a pastime during his first visit to Italy, before his embassy with the Pope.<sup>45</sup> These examples confirm the special interest the French had for these pieces. Moreover, they define a typical French reading of Petrarch. For, if not for religious reasons, they were at least used in the political context of the religious wars: a reading in Gallican terms around 1550, at the time of the Council of Trent, and a reading which also betrays clear Calvinist terms when both Calvinism and Gallicanism united in criticising the Pope. In his *De Episcopis Urbis* Papire Masson put forward Petrarch's texts.<sup>46</sup> At that same moment the historian Jacques-Auguste de Thou, who was one of the signatories of the Edict of Nantes, praised Petrarch as 'homme de bien et le plus savant personnage de son temps' and yet he mentions 'his feeling of injustice concerning the domination of the Pope'.<sup>47</sup> But even though he already possessed some editions of Petrarch's lyrical works in his personal library, he never mentioned Petrarch as a poet.<sup>48</sup>

These examples have not contradicted what we know about the lyrical, poetical and fashionable reading which the French continued to make of Petrarch's *Canzoniere*. For reading Petrarch, according to

<sup>45</sup> *Les Angéliques Amours* (s.l. [= Paris, Breyer]: 1593) âl.

<sup>46</sup> See Ronzy P., *Un humaniste italianisant. Papire Masson 1544–1611* (Paris: 1924).

<sup>47</sup> Thou J.-A. de, *Histoire universelle* 2 (London: 1734) 1, 83.

<sup>48</sup> *Catalogus Bibliothecae Thuanae* (s.l.: 1704) II, 302. Many of De Thou's copies of Petrarch are preserved: *Opera quae extant omnia* (Basel: 1581); Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal (folio BL 1235); *Le Rime*, ed. L. Castelvetro (Basel: 1582); *Catalogue de la Librairie Pierre Berès* 74 (Paris: 1983) no. 126; *Rime* (Venice: 1586); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France (Rés. Yd. 1151); *Familiarium libri XIV* (Geneva: 1601); Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal (8° BL 31461); *Le Petrarque en rime françois*, trad. P. de Maldeghem (Brussels: 1600); *Catalogue de la Librairie Potier* (Paris: 1863) no. 2117.

Pierre de Deimier, also served as a model for writing about love with delicacy and care ‘in a way that virtue could not be insulted’.<sup>49</sup> These examples show the complex process by which literary works can produce various readings.

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<sup>49</sup> Deimier P. de, *L'Académie de l'Art poétique* (Paris: 1610) 588.

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PETRARCH TRANSLATED AND ILLUSTRATED  
IN THE LOW COUNTRIES



PETRARCH TRANSLATED AND ILLUSTRATED IN  
JAN VAN DER NOOT'S *THEATRE* (1568)

Paul J. Smith

Petrarch's famous canzone *In Morte di Madonna Laura* was repeatedly translated, imitated and commented upon during the 16th century. In order to evaluate this reception in some detail, it is necessary to begin with a brief recapitulation of the six twelve-line 'Visions' of which the poem consists. These 'Visions' all describe in their first part a thing of beauty, and in their second part its destruction and downfall. The 'First Vision', opening with the famous line 'Standomi un giorno solo a la fenestra', is about a 'fera' pursued and finally brought down by two hounds, a white one and a black one. The 'Second Vision' describes the shipwreck of a rich merchant ship. The Third is about a laurel tree, blown down by a storm. The Fourth is about a beautiful fountain, with some nymphs sitting beside it, the whole scene disappearing in an earthquake. The Fifth presents a phoenix which, saddened by the destructions described in the Third and Fourth 'Visions', kills itself in an unusual way: the bird does not burn itself in order to arise from its ashes, but it pecks itself to death, without any resurrection. Finally there is the description of a beautiful lady, who is suddenly surrounded by a dark cloud and bitten to death by a poisoned snake. These six 'Visions' are rounded off by a three-line conclusion, a *congedo*, in which the poem is given permission to address itself to the poet:

Canzon, tu puoi ben dire:  
Queste sei visioni al signor mio  
An fatto un dolce di morir desio.<sup>1</sup>

A decisive step in the reception of this canzone is represented by the 16th-century Italian editions with important prose commentaries. The most influential commentaries are those by Alessandro Vellutello (1545), Giovanni Andrea Gesualdo (1533) and Pietro Bembo (1568).

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<sup>1</sup> Petrarch, *Opere. Canzoniere, Trionfi, Familiarium Rerum Libri* (Florence: 1975), canz. 323.

These commentaries explain how Petrarch's six 'Visions' should be interpreted allegorically: for example, the two hounds of the 'First Vision' symbolize Day and Night, thus signifying Time, which takes away the beloved Laura. The ship of the 'Second Vision' is an allegorical description of Laura's face. Although these commentaries mostly complement one another, there are some minor differences between the interpretations. For instance the little birds singing in the laurel tree in the 'Third Vision' are interpreted by Vellutello as Laura's singing companions, whereas Gesualdo and Bembo consider the birds to be representations of Laura's sweet voice.<sup>2</sup> These details will be of interest in some later interpretations of the canzone, as we shall see.

Another important step in the reception of this canzone is the French translation, provided by Clément Marot in 1533, on the instigation of King Francis I, to whom the poem's *congedo* subtly pays tribute:

O Chanson mienne, en tes conclusions  
Dy hardiment, ces six grands Visions  
A Monseigneur donnent ung doux desir  
De brièvement soubz la terre gesir.<sup>3</sup>

According to Gérard Defaux's interpretation, 'Marot a légèrement modifié le sens des derniers vers de sa traduction en opposant sa "Chanson sienne" et celui à qui il la destine, "Monseigneur", c'est-à-dire François I<sup>er</sup>. Il souligne ainsi le rôle joué par celui-ci dans sa traduction. Le "signor mio" du poème italien est Pétrarque; le "Monseigneur" de Marot n'est pas Marot, c'est le roi'.<sup>4</sup> The Marot translation was printed in *La Suite de l'adolescence clémentine*: more than 80 editions of *La Suite* before 1568 are known. There also exists an illustrated manuscript of Marot's translation, which is now in the Stirling Maxwell collection of the Glasgow University Library.<sup>5</sup> This manuscript on vellum is gorgeously illustrated by an unknown artist and is undated. Each 'Vision' occupies four pages: Marot's stanza being divided into two six-line strophes (two pages), one on the beauty of the object described, and the other on the destruction of the object. Both strophes are accompanied by a watercolour illustration

<sup>2</sup> I follow the analysis of Witstein S.F., *De verzencommentaar in Het Theatre van Jan van der Noot* (Utrecht: 1965) 20–23.

<sup>3</sup> Marot Clément, "Le Chant des Visions de Petrarque, traduit de Italien en François", in *Oeuvres poétiques*, ed. G. Defaux (Paris: 1990) I, 347–349.

<sup>4</sup> Marot, "Visions de Petrarque" I 752.

<sup>5</sup> Glasgow University Library, MS. SMM2.

(another two pages) [Fig. 1–2, 5–6, 9–10, 13–14]. This manuscript is not widely known among literary historians. In fact, until recently, it had only been studied in any detail by Michael Bath.<sup>6</sup>

There exists another illustrated manuscript of Petrarch's canzone, which is also little known. This is a lavishly illustrated and coloured manuscript, presently in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin.<sup>7</sup> This manuscript, made by an anonymous artist and originating in France before 1571, is structured in much the same way as the Glasgow manuscript: each 'Vision' occupies two facing pages, the left one containing the first six lines of the strophe, together with the corresponding illustration in watercolour [Fig. 18, 20], while the opposite page gives the text and the watercolour of the second half of the strophe [Fig. 19]. This manuscript was printed some years ago in a facsimile edition by a group of German and French scholars, who, curiously, did not seem aware of the existence of the Glasgow manuscript.<sup>8</sup> Until a recent article by Myra Orth and Richard Cooper,<sup>9</sup> both manuscripts had never been examined together.

In about the same period as the production of the manuscripts, Petrarch's canzone was also published in an illustrated printed edition. Or, more precisely, it was integrated in the larger context of Dutch, French and English versions of a book by the aristocratic Antwerp Protestant poet Jan van der Noot, who, in 1567, was forced to leave his hometown and flee to London for having taken part in an insurrection. Shortly after his arrival in London, the Dutch and the French versions were published in London by the printer John Day in the same year 1568, the Dutch one under a long title, to which I refer here in an abridged form: *Het Theatre oft toon-neel* [. . .], the French one's title being shorter and more comprehensive: *Le Theatre auquel sont exposés et montrés les inconvenients et misères qui suivent les mondains et vicieux*. In 1569 an English version of the same book was published

<sup>6</sup> Bath M., "Verse Form and Pictorial Space in Van der Noot's *Theatre for Worldlings*", in Höltgen K.J., Daly P.M., Lottes W. (eds.), *Word and Visual Imagination. Studies in the Interaction of English Literature and the Visual Arts* (Erlangen: 1988) 73–105.

<sup>7</sup> Staatsbibliothek Berlin, Ms. Phill. 1926.

<sup>8</sup> Lecoq A.-M. – Winter U. – Heintze H. (eds.), *Les six Triumphe et les six Visions Messire Francois Petrarque; Die sechs Triumphe und die sechs Visionen des Herrn Francesco Petrarca. Der Manuskript MS. Phill. 1926 aus dem Bestand der Deutschen Staatsbibliothek Berlin* (Wiesbaden: 1988).

<sup>9</sup> Orth M. – Cooper R., "Un manuscrit peint des 'Visions de Pétrarque' traduites par Marot", in Balsamo J. (ed.), *Les poètes français de la Renaissance et Pétrarque* (Geneva: 2004) 53–71.

by the printer Henry Bynneman: the etchings of the Dutch and French editions, made by Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder [Fig. 4, 8, 12, 16], are replaced by woodcuts made by an unknown artist [Fig. 3, 7, 11, 15], and Petrarch's poems have been translated by the young Edmund Spenser. Both the French and English versions are dedicated to Queen Elisabeth, whose policy at that time was to support the Protestants in the Low Countries. In 1572, a German edition of the *Theatre* was published in Cologne, in which the woodcuts of the English edition are reused.

These four editions of the *Theatre*, together with the two manuscript versions of Petrarch's 'Visions', form an interesting corpus, which will be the object of my study in the rest of this article. More precisely, I would like to analyze how the Petrarch translation is fitted into the broader context of Van der Noot's *Theatre*. I will shed new light on the function of Petrarch in the Protestant discourse of the book as a whole, the relations between word and image within the book, and the intertextual and inter pictorial relations between the Dutch, the French, the English and the German editions as well as the Glasgow and the Berlin manuscripts.<sup>10</sup> I would like to conclude with some general remarks on the importance of Petrarch in the work of Van der Noot.

The Dutch, the French and the English editions of the book consist of two sections, which have been visualised in Table I.

Table I. General structure of *Het Theatre*<sup>11</sup>

<i>Theatre</i> , First section	Sources and illustrations
6 'Visions' by Petrarch (including the three concluding lines)	Translation by Marot and the original Italian text. All six 'Visions' are illustrated

<sup>10</sup> I regret that for reasons of copyright and available space it is not possible to reproduce here the whole series of woodcuts, etchings and watercolours in question. The reader will find all etchings in J. van der Noot, *Het Bosken en het Theatre*, ed. W.A.P. Smit – W. Vermeer (Amsterdam-Antwerp: 1953; reprint Utrecht: 1979). The woodcuts can be found in the facsimile edition of J. van der Noot, *A Theatre for Voluptuous Worldlings*, ed. L.S. Friedland (New York: 1977). The watercolours of the Glasgow manuscript are reproduced by Bath, "Verse Form and Pictorial Space" and by Orth—Cooper, "Un manuscrit peint" and the watercolours of the Berlin manuscript are reproduced by Lecoq—Winter—Heintze, *Les six Triumphe*.

<sup>11</sup> Information based on Witstein, *De verzencommentaar* and Bostoen K., *Dichterschap*

Table 1 (*cont.*)

<i>Theatre</i> , First section	Sources and illustrations
11 sonnets from Du Bellay's <i>Songe</i>	Four sonnets of the original <i>Songe</i> are not included: nos. 6, 8, 13, 14. No. 1 is included, but not illustrated
4 sonnets by Van der Noot	All four sonnets are illustrated; they are all based on the book <i>Apocalypse</i>
1. the Seven-headed Monster	
2. the Whore of Babylon	
3. the Final Judgment	
4. the Eternal City	
<i>Theatre</i> , Second section	Sources
2 pages: commentary on Petrarch's 'Visions'	Commentaries by Vellutello and Bembo or Gesualdo
4 pages: commentary on Du Bellay's <i>Songe</i>	Bullinger, <i>In Apocalypsin conciones centum</i> (1557), translated into Dutch (1567)
Commentary on the four sonnets by Van der Noot	General sources: John Bale, <i>The Image of bothe Churches</i> (1550), translated into Dutch by Carolus Regius (1555); 'Denakol' (= Magdelon de Candole), <i>Sacs et Pieces pour le Pape de Rome</i> (1561)
Introduction: 16 pages	
Part 1: 34 pages	
Part 2: 29 pages	
Part 3: 20 pages	
Part 4: 19 pages	
Summary: 4 pages	
Conclusion: 22 pages	

The first section opens with the six 'Visions' by Petrarch. The main source of the Dutch version of the *Theatre* is Marot's French translation, although the original text in Italian is also used.<sup>12</sup> The French version of the *Theatre* includes the integral text of Marot's translation, with one interesting variant: the verse 'A Monseigneur donnent ung doulx desir' of the *congedo* has been replaced by 'A mon Seigneur donnent ung doulx plaisir'. By writing 'mon Seigneur', the poet seems

*en koopmanschap in de zestiende eeuw. Omtrent de dichters Guillaume de Poetou en Jan van der Noot* (Deventer: 1987) 63–64. The edition consulted is the one edited by Smit W.A.P. and Vermeer W.

<sup>12</sup> This has already been established by Vermeylen A., *Leven en Werken van Jonker Jan van der Noot* (Amsterdam: 1899).



to restore the original Petrarchan meaning,<sup>13</sup> and by substituting 'desir' by 'plaisir' the poet's longing for death is attenuated, for some unknown (personal, religious?) reasons. The six 'Visions' by Petrarch are followed by eleven sonnets taken from the *Songe* (1558) by the Pléiade poet Joachim Du Bellay, in the Dutch translation for the Dutch version of the *Theatre* and in the original French text in the French version of the *Theatre*. The first section is concluded by four sonnets, written in Dutch or French by Van der Noot himself and directly inspired by the biblical Apocalypse.

The second section of the book is a very long prose commentary, which can be considered a collage of recent Protestant commentaries on the Apocalypse, and of a number of anti-Catholic works. Van der Noot's sources are more or less well known since the studies of Witstein, Van Dorsten and Bostoen<sup>14</sup>—although to date no study exists of the French edition of the book. The section begins with a two-page interpretation of the Petrarch poems of the first section. This interpretation of Petrarch is largely based on Vellutello and probably on one of the two other commentators. As is demonstrated by Witstein, this can be deduced from the different interpretations they give of certain details, like the birds on the laurel tree, mentioned above.<sup>15</sup> The four-page interpretation of the Du Bellay sonnets is inspired by the sermons by the theologian Heinrich Bullinger, the successor of Zwingli in Zurich. The very long interpretation of the four apocalyptic sonnets by Van der Noot is largely inspired by a book of John Bale, translated into Dutch by Carolus Regius, who probably was Carel de Coninck, the Protestant martyr who was burned at the stake in Bruges in 1557. The other source is a French anti-Catholic pamphlet, entitled *Sacs et Pieces pour le Pape de Rome*, dating from 1561. Looking at the distribution of the pages over the two sections, one notices the overwhelming length of the second section. Dutch critics have rightly compared the structure of the book to a huge Protestant temple, with a small Renaissance frontispiece or entrance: the Renaissance entrance being the first section, which is no more than a poetic and artistic eye-catcher. It is to this first section that I want to limit myself in the rest of this article.

<sup>13</sup> This is also visible in Spenser's translation: 'thy lorde', i.e. the poet himself.

<sup>14</sup> Witstein, *De verzencommentaar*; Bostoen, *Dichterschap en koopmanschap*; Dorsten J.A. van, *The Radical Arts. First Decade of the Elizabethan Renaissance* (Leiden: 1970).

<sup>15</sup> Witstein, *De verzencommentaar*.

What is the general structure of this first section? The six Petrarchan and the eleven Du Bellay poems are pessimistic in the sense that they all point to the violent destruction of worldly affairs: earthly love in the Petrarchan cycle, Roman grandeur in the Du Bellay cycle. This is also true of the first two sonnets by Van der Noot, which describe the coming of the Seven-headed Beast of the Apocalypse<sup>16</sup> and the Whore of Babylon. The penultimate sonnet describes the Final Judgement, and the very last one gives the irenic vision of the Eternal City. This general, overall structure shows that Van der Noot interpreted the poems by Petrarch and Du Bellay in an apocalyptic perspective, and he also is quite aware of the intertextual relationships between Petrarch and Du Bellay. This is visible too in Van der Noot's choice of texts from Du Bellay's *Songe*. His *Songe* originally consisted of fifteen sonnets. The question is of course why Van der Noot left out four sonnets. I think his first reason for doing so is to avoid any redundancy. He left out Du Bellay's sonnet 13 on the wrecking of a rich ship, which is thematically a duplication of Petrarch's 'Second Vision'. He left out Du Bellay's sonnet 6 on the she-wolf and Romulus and Remus, because Van der Noot is aware that this is theme which reoccurs in sonnet 9 of *Songe*. He left out sonnets 8 and 14 because by their choice of subject they duplicate Van der Noot's own apocalyptic sonnet. Sonnet 8 of *Songe* is indeed about a seven-headed monster, and sonnet 14 of *Songe* is about a beautiful city which is 'quasi semblable à celle/Que vit le messager de la bonne nouvelle' (i.e. Saint John of the Apocalypse). This beautiful city in Du Bellay's vision is destroyed: it is clear that this vision would create some confusion with Van der Noot's own final sonnet on the Eternal City.

The second reason for leaving out the four Du Bellay sonnets is because of the symbolic number 21. This number certainly has symbolic connotations—21 is traditionally a number of perfection, which entertains a relationship with its inverse: 12. Both numbers are omnipresent in the *Theatre*. To give some examples: in Van der Noot's prose commentary it is said with some insistence that Petrarch has loved Laura for 21 years. The description of the Eternal City in

<sup>16</sup> For a close reading of this sonnet and the corresponding commentary and illustrations (woodcut and etching), see Bostoen K., "Van der Noot's Apocalyptic Visions: Do You 'See' what You Read?", in Westerweel B. (ed.), *Anglo-Dutch Relations in the Field of the Emblem* (Leiden: 1997) 49–61.

poem 21 is based on Apocalypse 21, verse 21. The last word of the final sonnet is the Dutch expression 'twaalf mael' ('twelve times'). In the prose commentary there is a long description of the Eternal City, based on the Apocalypse, in which are detailed the twelve precious stones of which this city is made.

My interpretation of the omnipresence of the numbers twelve and twenty-one is not as farfetched as it may seem. In 1578 the Pléiade poet Remy Belleau published a collection of poems on precious stones, entitled *Les Pierres précieuses*. In this collection Belleau presents twenty-one poems, describing twenty-one gems, with references to the twelve gems of the biblical Eternal City.<sup>17</sup> More generally, the number symbolism seems to structure other collections related to Van der Noot's *Theatre* and Petrarch's 'Visions'. Du Bellay's *Songe*, for instance, consists of fifteen sonnets, fifteen being the number of theology.<sup>18</sup> One can affirm in addition that, if one subtracts the *Songe*'s opening poem on the falling asleep of the poet-narrator, and the concluding poem on the awakening of the narrator, one has thirteen sonnets left, thirteen always and everywhere being an unlucky number, well fitted to symbolize Du Bellay's visions of destruction. The other volume by Du Bellay influenced by Petrarch's 'Visions' is *Les Antiquitez de Rome*, which numbers thirty-two sonnets. Enlarged with the introductory poem 'Au Roy', 'To the King' one arrives at the perfect number thirty-three. This hesitation between thirty-two and thirty-three is deliberate on the part of the poet, according to Cynthia Skenazi's interpretation: 'L'oscillation entre 32 et 33 semble indiquer la direction d'une quête d'immortalité (qui, de manière spéculaire, est aussi celle du poète lui-même, soucieux de la survie de son oeuvre) sans prétendre d'y arriver'.<sup>19</sup> Edmund Spenser, who translated Van der Noot as well as Du Bellay, interpreted this number symbolism in the same way. He leaves out, in his own translation of the *Antiquitez*, the sonnet 'Au Roy', and adds at the end of the collection a sonnet numbered 33, which is, not surprisingly, about the immortality of Du Bellay.<sup>20</sup>

Returning to Van der Noot, one can see the same hesitation, because,

<sup>17</sup> Chayes E. – Smith P.J., "Structures changeantes des *Pierres précieuses* (1576) de Remy Belleau", *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France* 104 (2004) 25–44.

<sup>18</sup> Skenazi C., "Le poète et le roi dans les *Antiquitez de Rome* et le *Songe* de Du Bellay", *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et de Renaissance* 60 (1998) 41–55 (esp. 55).

<sup>19</sup> Skenazi, "Le poète et le roi" 55.

<sup>20</sup> Prescott A.L., *French Poets and the English Renaissance. Studies in Fame and Transformation* (New Haven-London: 1978) 51.

of the twenty-one sonnets, only twenty are illustrated. This means that in the *Theatre* there is also a hesitation between twenty and twenty-one. The poems are looking for perfection, which they seem to find only in the prose commentary by Van der Noot, or in the biblical text of the Apocalypse itself.

Perhaps this is also the way we should look at the six 'Visions' of Petrarch. They also oscillate between six and seven (the traditional number of completion), because of the three-line *congedo* which ends the canzone. In other words, the phrase 'un dolce di morir desio' expresses a desire for a sweet completion in death, after the preceding six violent 'Visions'—a completion which the poem will find in Spenser's translation, as we shall see in our conclusion.

It is now time to take a closer look at the illustrations. These illustrations are etchings made by the Flemish artist Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, who had just arrived in London as a refugee. In 1568 he made the acquaintance of Van der Noot, perhaps through the painter-poet Lucas d'Heere, another Flemish refugee. The collaboration resulted in twenty etchings, the etching technique being a method until then completely unknown in British book production. The printer, John Day, was always interested in new developments in book printing.

The illustrations and their layout confer to the whole book an emblematic look, which is why the book is often considered the first emblem book produced in England. Contrary to the watercolours of the Glasgow and the Berlin manuscripts, which both have two illustrations per 'Vision', Gheeraerts represents in one illustration the two moments of the stanza or sonnet in question: the glory and the fall of the subject. In combining the two decisive steps of the narration, Gheeraerts adheres to a wide-spread iconographic tradition, which he himself had made use of in his emblematic fable book *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (1567).

The same etchings were used in the French edition of the text, but the English edition, printed by Bynneman in 1569, uses woodcuts. These woodcuts, made by an unknown engraver, are not as crude as is often suggested, but they certainly lack the genius of Gheeraerts.

There has been some discussion between scholars on the filiation of the etchings and the woodcuts. According to Werner Waterschoot,<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Waterschoot W., "An Author's Strategy: Jan van der Noot's *Het Theatre*", in Westerweel B. (ed.), *Anglo-Dutch Relations in the Field of the Emblem* (Leiden: 1997) 35–47.

the etchings were made prior to the woodcuts. He bases his argument on the fact that in at least one case the maker of the woodcuts simply seems to copy the plate without understanding the text that goes with it. And on two other woodcuts he discovered some details, 'stressed disproportionally, as if the artist was happy to detect these meticulous details in his model and as if he wanted to copy them as a proof of his diligence.'<sup>22</sup> Waterschoot's arguments are not really convincing, because wood does not admit the finer details possible with etching, and secondly, one can also use these arguments to prove that the woodcuts were first, and that the etcher Marcus Gheeraerts refined them.

According to Michael Bath,<sup>23</sup> the woodcuts did indeed come first, and he bases his argumentation on the existence of the Glasgow manuscript (which Waterschoot fails to consider). For Bath the sequence is: first the manuscript, then the woodcuts, and finally the copperplates. Bath's hypothesis fits well with the illustrations of the 'First Vision'. The woodcut (Fig. 3) is the reversed copy of the two corresponding watercolours in the Glasgow manuscript (Fig. 1–2), whereas Gheeraerts's etching (Fig. 4) is the reversed copy of the woodcut. The same thing can be said of Petrarch's 'Sixth Vision': the woodcut (Fig. 7) resembles in detail the two corresponding watercolours (Fig. 5–6), and is a reversed copy of them, whereas Gheeraerts's etching (Fig. 8) is a free copy of the woodcut. There is only one sequence which is problematic at first sight: the 'Third Vision' (on the laurel tree). In both the watercolours (Fig. 9 and Fig. 10) and the woodcut (Fig. 11), the wind is blowing from the right side, whereas in the etching (Fig. 12) the wind comes from the other side. This is, however, not an argument in favour of the priority of the etching, but rather of the fact that in some instances the maker of the woodcut allows himself some liberty with respect to his watercolour model. This liberty can also be observed in the way he represents the fallen tree, not straight and unbroken, but bent under the heavy storm. This pictorial detail is picked up by Gheeraerts in his etching.

Equally problematic is the representation of the phoenix of Petrarch's 'Fifth Vision'. In the watercolours (Fig. 13–14), the phoenix's tail is

<sup>22</sup> Waterschoot, "An Author's Strategy" 38.

<sup>23</sup> Bath, "Verse Form and Pictorial Space".

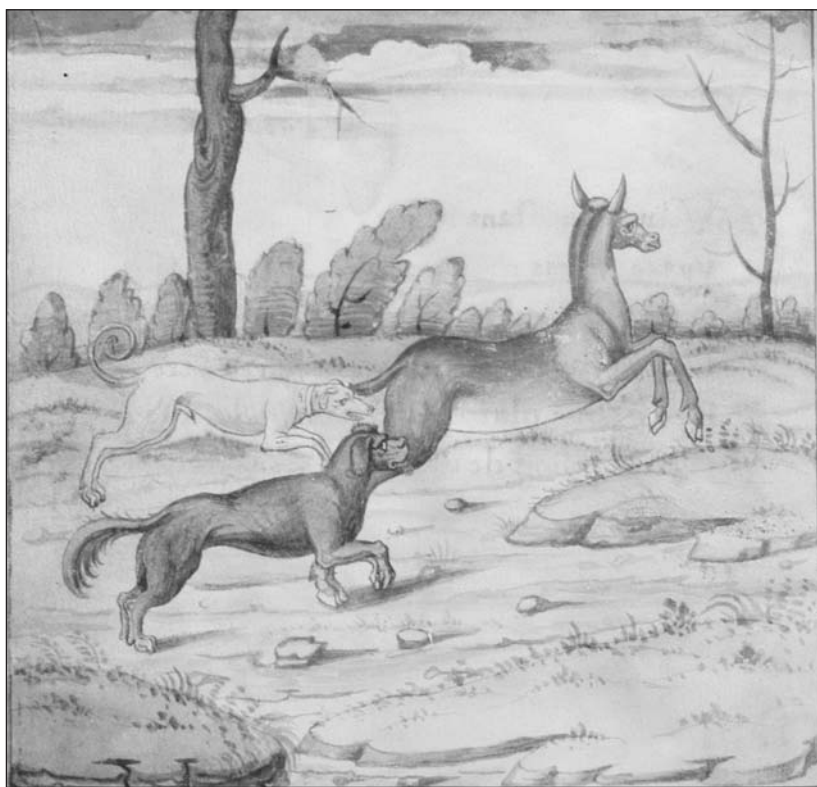


Fig. 1. Watercolour, Glasgow University Library, ms. SMMS2, p. 5.  
Hind chased by two hounds.



Fig. 2. Watercolour, Glasgow University Library, ms. SMMS2, p. 2.  
Hind caught by two hounds.





Fig. 3. Woodcut. Jan van der Noot, *A Theatre for Worldlings*  
(London, Bynneman: 1569).





Fig. 4. [Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder], etching, in Jan van der Noot, *Het Theatre* [...] (London: 1568).



Fig. 5. Watercolour, Glasgow University Library, ms. SMMS2, p. 32.



Fig. 6. Watercolour, Glasgow University Library, ms. SMMS2, p. 35.  
Lady bitten by a snake.



Fig. 7. Woodcut. Jan van der Noot, *A Theatre for Worldlings* (London, Bynneman: 1569).





Fig. 8. [Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder], etching, in Jan van der Noot, *Het Theatre* [...] (London: 1568).

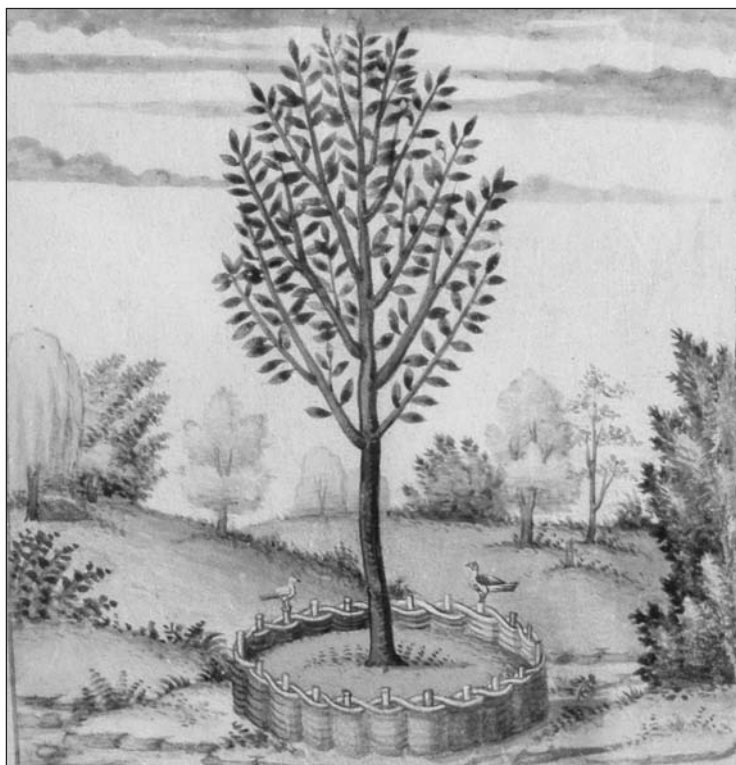


Fig. 9. Watercolour, Glasgow University Library, ms. SMMS2,  
p. 14. Laurel tree.



Fig. 10. Watercolour, Glasgow University Library, ms. SMMS2, p. 17. Laurel tree blown down.



Fig. 11. Woodcut. Jan van der Noot, *A Theatre for Worldlings*  
(London, Bynneman: 1569).





Fig. 12. [Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder], etching, in Jan van der Noot, *Het Theatre* [...] (London: 1568).



Fig. 13. Watercolour, Glasgow University Library, ms. SMMS2, p. 26. Phoenix.



Fig. 14. Watercolour, Glasgow University Library, ms. SMMS2, p. 29. Phoenix killing itself.

bent downward, whereas the tail of the etched and the engraved phoenixes (Fig. 15 and Fig. 16) is curled upward in a rather characteristic way. In this detail, the bird in the woodcut and the one in the etching differ from the one in the watercolour, but they resemble very much another etching Gheeraerts made of the phoenix. This etching (Fig. 17) occurs in the previously mentioned fable book *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren*, published in 1567, just before Gheeraerts fled to England. How can we explain the resemblance between the two etchings and the woodcut? A possible answer to this question is that, perhaps, Gheeraerts was also involved in the making of the woodcuts, not as the artist, but as the inventor who gave a first sketch to the artist who, for his part, could immediately start work, whereas Gheeraerts himself had to wait for his materials, that is, the appropriate copperplates and the acid, which of course were not promptly available on his arrival in London. When he finally could begin his etchings, he no longer had his first sketches at hand, but he did not need them because he could now use the woodcuts as his model.

Of course, Van der Noot himself was involved in the project right from the start. He preferred Gheeraerts's etchings because of their novelty and artistic quality, but the woodcuts were less fragile than the etchings and therefore physically more appropriate for reprints and for transportation during long journeys.<sup>24</sup> This explains why the same woodcuts were used in the German edition, and afterwards in Antwerp: Van der Noot simply carried them with him during his travels through Europe. Moreover, it seems that Gheeraerts mostly kept his copperplates in his own possession, as he did with the ones he made for his *Warachtighe fabulen*.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> This is also the opinion of Waterschoot, "An Author's Strategy" 40–41. This finding seems to contradict Alison Saunders' observations: 'There is an interesting difference [...] in the way in which emblematic illustrations crossed frontiers. When woodcut illustrations migrated across Europe, these were virtually always printed copies rather than from the original woodblocks. But with copperplate engravings, in several cases the original copperplates travelled across Europe.' Cf. Saunders A., "Which Bits Travel More Easily? The European Dissimination of Emblematic Figure and Text", in Dijkhuizen J.F. van – Hoftijzer P. – Roding J. – Smith P. (eds.), *Living in Posterity. Essays in Honour of Bart Westerweel* (Hilversum: 2004) 229–238 (esp. 236).

<sup>25</sup> Smith P.J., "De titelprenten van Marcus Gheeraerts", in Vaeck M. van – Brems H. – Claassens G.H.M. (eds.), *De steen van Alciato. Literatuur en visuele cultuur in de Nederlanden. Opstellen voor prof. dr. Karel Porteman bij zijn emiritaat. / The Stone of Alciato. Literature and Visual Culture in the Low Countries. Essays in Honour of Karel Porteman* (Louvain: 2003) 535–557.





Fig. 15. Woodcut. Jan van der Noot, *A Theatre for Worldlings* (London, Bynneman: 1569).



Fig. 16. [Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder], etching, in Jan van der Noot, *Het Theatre* [...] (London: 1568).



Fig. 17. Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder, etching, in Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder & Eduard de Dene, *De warachtighe fabulen der dieren* (Brugge, Pieter de Clerck: 1567), 208.



Let us now turn to the Berlin manuscript of Petrarch's 'Visions'. This manuscript's watercolours are thematically related to the ones of the Glasgow manuscript. The manuscript is dedicated to Madeleine de l'Aubespine, Mme de Villeroy, who is one of the influential patronesses of the Pléiade poets. The manuscript cannot be dated with any precision, but at the end of the manuscript there is a poem dedicated to King Charles IX, who reigned from 1560 to 1571. The Berlin manuscript must therefore be dated between those two dates.

Which one of the two manuscripts came first, and what is their relationship to the printed illustrations?<sup>26</sup> The only publication which provides an answer to these questions is the above-mentioned article by Myra Orth and Richard Cooper. This article, to which I refer the reader for its detailed information on the material and iconographic aspects of the manuscripts, curiously assumes the priority of Gheeraerts's etchings to the woodcuts: 'la pose de la dame [the lady of the 'Sixth Vision'] dans l'eau-forte de 1568 ne ressemble aucunement à la miniature [i.e. the Glasgow manuscript], alors que l'artiste de la gravure sur bois de 1569 reproduit exactement les poses dans le manuscrit.' Instead of following Michael Bath's plausible hypothesis, which posits, as we saw, the sequence Glasgow manuscript—woodcut—etching, Orth and Cooper come to a different conclusion: 'Le manuscrit de Berlin aurait influencé celui de Glasgow; par la suite Gheeraerts aurait utilisé le volume de Glasgow, qui se trouvait peut-être alors à Londres, pour ses eaux-fortes de 1568, et l'artiste de 1569 aurait consulté le manuscrit de Glasgow quand il reprit et travailla les gravures de Gheeraerts.' And, to add to the confusion, in their concluding lines they refer to yet another hypothesis, defended in a book soon to be published, which contradicts their own: 'En revanche, le Professeur J.B. Trapp, du Warburg Institute de Londres, estime que les deux manuscrits de Glasgow et de Berlin dérivent des gravures de Gheeraerts, et qu'il datent de la fin du règne de Charles

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<sup>26</sup> My argumentation is based on the illustrations, not on the texts. The numerous but minor textual variants between the two manuscripts as well as the Van der Noot version (and other versions of the Marot translation I have seen) are not relevant to the discussion. As they do not include the Van der Noot variant 'plaisir' instead of 'desir', both manuscripts go back to Marot's original text, and are therefore probably of French origin. This can be confirmed by some iconographic details of the watercolours: 'le style des aquarelles et [celui] de l'écriture paraissent français plutôt que flamand ou anglais'; see Orth – Cooper, "Un manuscrit peint" 59.



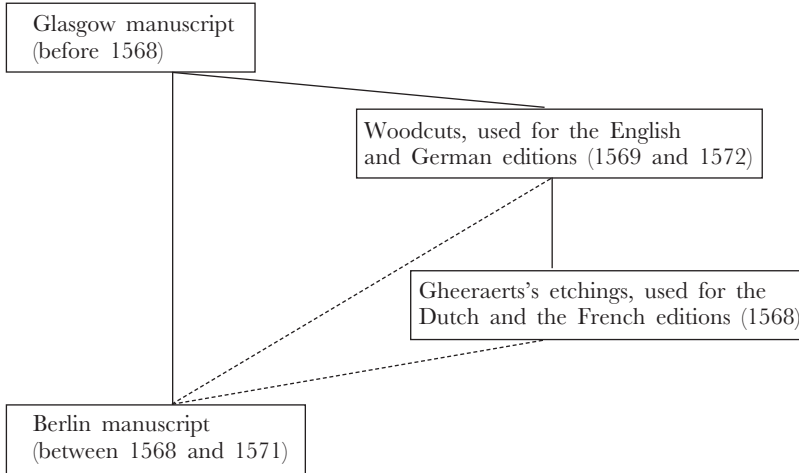
IX, vers 1570'—unfortunately no further argumentation or information is given.

Therefore, at least until the publication of Trapp's book, the discussion seems far from closed. For the time being, however, I think the most appropriate way to resolve the problem of priority of the two manuscripts is to search for the distinctive pictorial differences between them, few and minimal as they are. I have noticed three relevant distinctive features: the first one concerns the hind of the 'First Vision'. In the Berlin manuscript the hind has small horns [Fig. 18], which she lacks in the Glasgow manuscript. Secondly, the fallen laurel tree in the Third Vision is straight in the Glasgow manuscript, while it is bent in the Berlin manuscript [Fig. 19] (this is also noted by Orth and Cooper). And thirdly, the tail of the phoenix in the Fifth Vision appears to be bent downward in the Glasgow manuscript, and curled upward in the Berlin manuscript [Fig. 20]. These three distinctive features are also present, as we have seen, in the woodcuts and the etchings of the editions of Van der Noot's *Theatre*. On the basis of these facts it seems logical to suggest two hypotheses: either the Berlin manuscript was manufactured between the Glasgow manuscript and the printed illustrations, or the Berlin manuscript is posterior both to the Glasgow manuscript and the printed illustrations. In this last case the painter of the Berlin manuscript had as a second model one of the printed versions of the *Theatre*, the first model, of course, being the Glasgow manuscript. This last hypothesis seems the best, because the lady of the 'Sixth Vision' in the Berlin manuscript does not resemble the one represented in the woodcut (Fig. 7), whereas the same lady in the Glasgow manuscript (Fig. 5) resembles very closely the one in the woodcut (Fig. 7). Therefore the Berlin manuscript could not have been produced between the Glasgow manuscript and the woodcuts (or the etchings). This brings us logically to a dating of the Berlin manuscript between 1568 and 1571. The proposed filiation between the illustrations can be visualized in the following stemma (Table II):<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> The two dotted lines indicate the two possible filiations between the Berlin manuscript and the woodcuts and etchings. Because of the French origin of this manuscript, the French edition of the *Theatre* seems to be its most plausible source.

Table II. Filiations of the illustrations



Before concluding, some attention should be paid to the German edition of the *Theatre*.<sup>28</sup> This book has a very different appearance: its pages have beautiful ornamental frame-works, which are absent from the previous editions of the *Theatre*, but which are identical to the ones of Van der Noot's *Stammbuch*, also published in 1572.<sup>29</sup> The book is given a more balanced structure: its prose commentary is enormously reduced, the virulent anti-Catholic passages have been left out, and the verse commentaries are placed directly after the poems. And in the commentary on Petrarch, there is one particular textual change, which can be explained by Van der Noot's possible travels in France on his way to Germany, after having left England. During his travels he could have passed by Avignon, which would explain the following details, absent from the Dutch, French and English editions of the *Theatre*. In the German commentary we read:

Dieser *Petrarcha* nach dem er xxj. jar lang grosse und gleichwol ehrliche lieb getragen hat zu einer schönen unnd lieblichen Tochter *Laurette* oder [von] jhme *Madonna Laura* genant, geboren zu *Bancluse* [i.e. Vauchuse] bey *Lisle de Venise* [i.e. Isle-sur-la-Sorgue], nit weit von *Avignon* gelegen, davon noch die mauren eines alten verfallenen Hauses dz Hausz

<sup>28</sup> Van der Noot Jan, *Theatrum, das ist, Schauplatz* [. . .] (s.l.: 1572) s.p.

<sup>29</sup> On the relationship between the two works, see van der Noot Jan, *Stammbuch*, ed. W. Waterschoot (Ghent: 1971) 60–62.

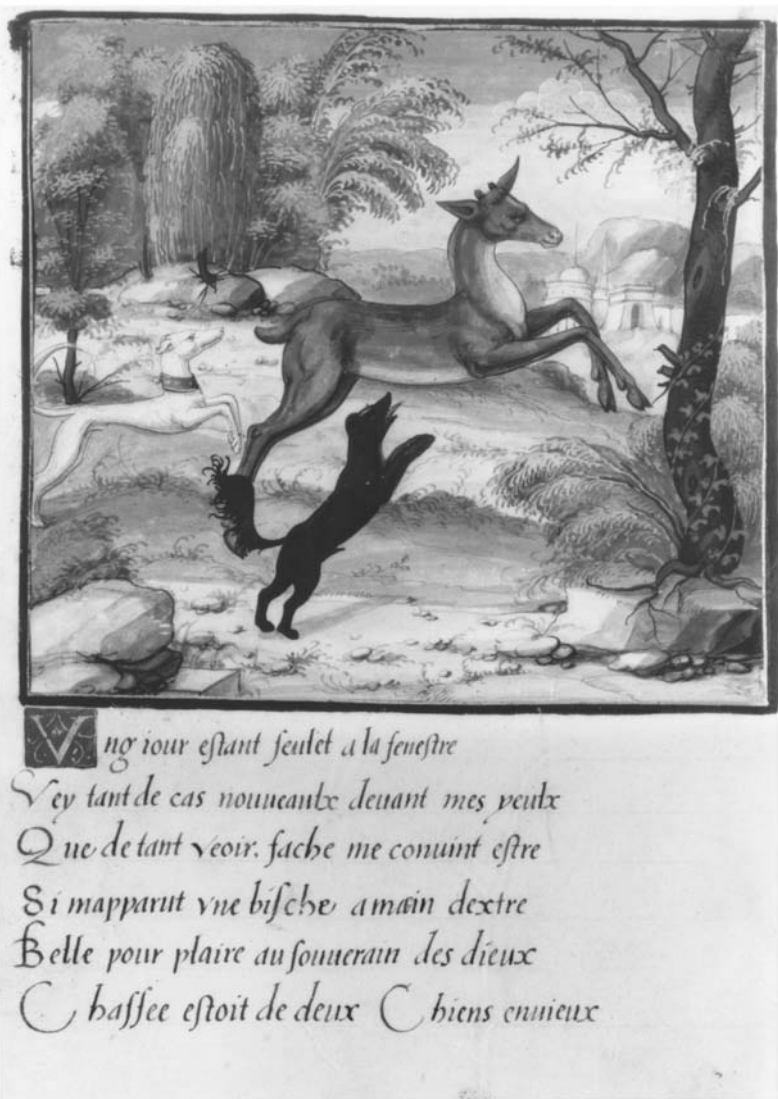


Fig. 18. Watercolour, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, ms. Phill. 1926, fol. 12v.  
 Hind chased by two hounds.



**E**t avant loeil fiche sur ce laurier  
 Le ciel entour commence a varier  
 Et a noircir, dont la fouldre grant erre  
 Vint arracher celluy plant bien heureux  
 Qui me faict estre a iamaïs langoureux  
 Car plus telle vmbre on ne recouure en terre

Fig. 19. Watercolour, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, ms. Phill. 1926, fol. 12r.  
 Laurel tree blown down.



**A**n boys ie vey vng seul Phenix portant  
 A esles de pourpre, & le chef tout dore,  
 E strange estoit, dont pensay en l'instant  
 Veoir quelque corps celeste, iusque a tant  
 Qu'il vint a l'arbre en pieces demoure  
 Et au ruisseau que terre a deuore

Fig. 20. Watercolour, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, ms. Phill. 1926, fol. 18v. Phoenix.

*Petrarchae* genennet wird. Darbey is auch die wunderliche Fonteine oder Brunnen da der Flusz *Sorga* jhren ursprung bekompt, steht zwischen zweyen Gibeln auf einem grossen Berg, gleich wie die Brunne des fliegenden Pferds *Pegasis* zwischen den *Helicon* und *Parnassum* springt. Hier pflegt der vorbenenter *Petrarcha* zu Poetisieren. Welche Fonteine zu allem Wahrzeichen noch auff den Heutigen tag der Brunne *Petrarchae* genent wirdt.

This could well be the first description of the famous source of the Vaucluse by someone from the Low Countries, which means that Van der Noot can be considered the first known Dutch 'Petrarch tourist'.

This description announces the further reception of Petrarch in Van der Noot's works. In his later works Marot and Du Bellay are scarcely mentioned. Once he returned to Catholicism, his two great models became Petrarch and Ronsard. Van der Noot considered himself a third Petrarch, Ronsard being the second. In imitation of Laura, he created his own Olympia. In his later works he used Laura and, among others, Cassandre as characters who discuss, in Italian and in French, Van der Noot's own poems.

Van der Noot's *Theatre* appears to be very innovative, with respect both to its material presentation and its contents. It is a milestone in the reception of Petrarch in the Low Countries, which is inextricably entwined with the reception of Marot and Ronsard.<sup>30</sup> The book is at the very birth of the Petrarchan sonnet in German literature.<sup>31</sup> It also has its influence in England. I have already mentioned Edmund Spenser who, as a schoolboy, was asked by Van der Noot to translate Petrarch's 'Visions' from the Marot translation. More than twenty years later, in 1591, he published his *Complaints*, in which he incorporated all the Petrarch and Du Bellay 'Visions' and the whole of Du Bellay's *Antiquitez de Rome*. In bringing together Petrarch and Du Bellay, he follows the example of Van der Noot, with two significant differences: he does not insert any poetical commentary in his collection. And second, he translates Petrarch's six twelve-line stanzas into six regular sonnets and put them not at the beginning but at the end of the collection. He concludes with Petrarch's *congedo*, not by making a literal translation of three or four lines, but

<sup>30</sup> All this is extensively described by Catharina Ypes in her old but seminal study *Petrarca in de Nederlandse Letterkunde* (Amsterdam: 1934).

<sup>31</sup> Forster L., "Jan van der Noot und die deutsche Renaissancelyrik. Stand und Aufgaben der Forschung", in *Literatur und Geistesgeschichte. Festgabe für Heinz Otto Burger* (Berlin: 1968) 70–84 (esp. 74).

by creating a whole sonnet out of it. This sonnet is added to the six other sonnets, thus completing the symbolic number seven. Therefore Spenser's translation of Petrarch's *congedo* concludes and resumes, as it were, the whole of Spenser's *Complaints*, and by doing so it simultaneously rounds off the intriguing transalpine filiations of readings and imitations of Petrarch's 'Visions', which started with the French translation by Marot.<sup>32</sup>

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